

2000 Miles on Foot:

Walks through Great
Britain and France . .

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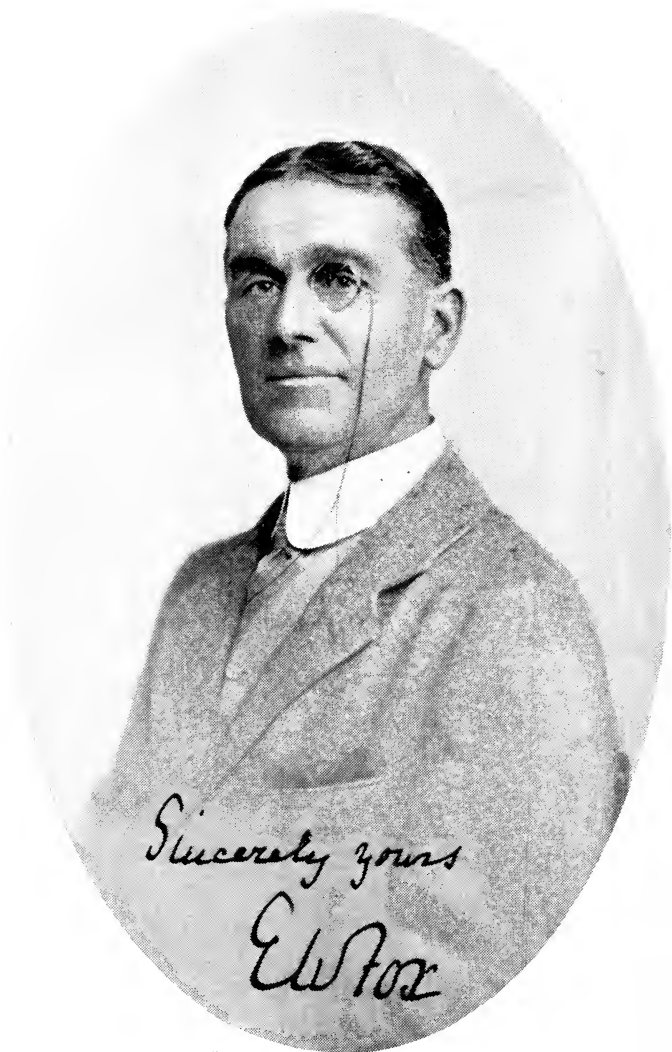
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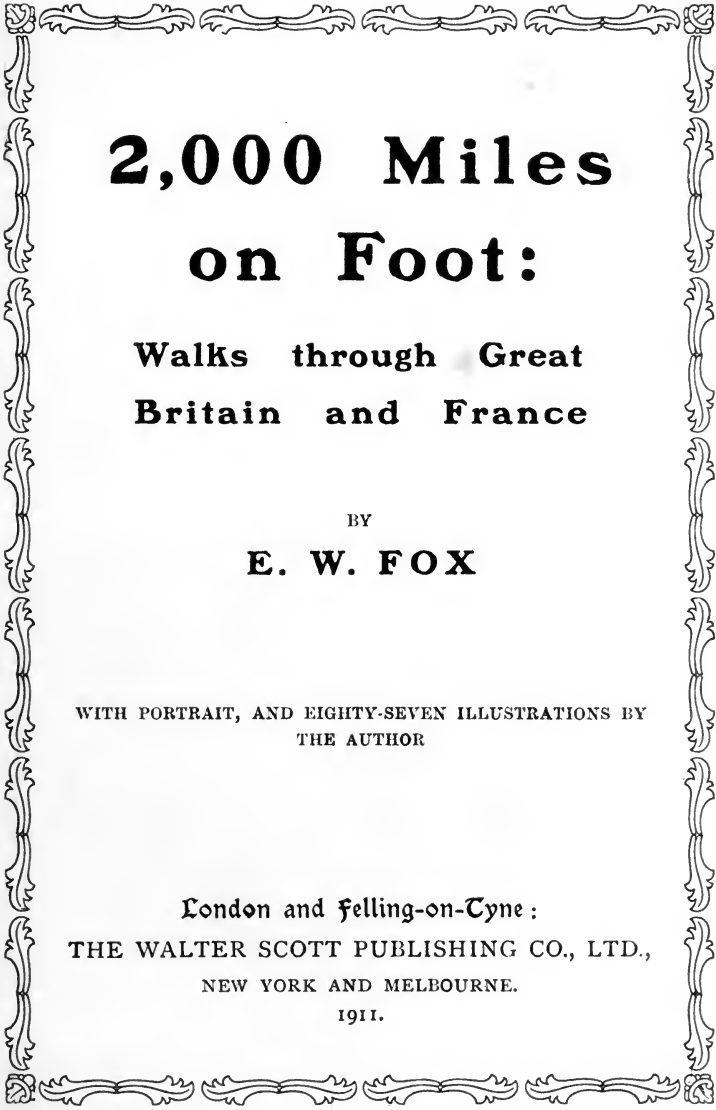
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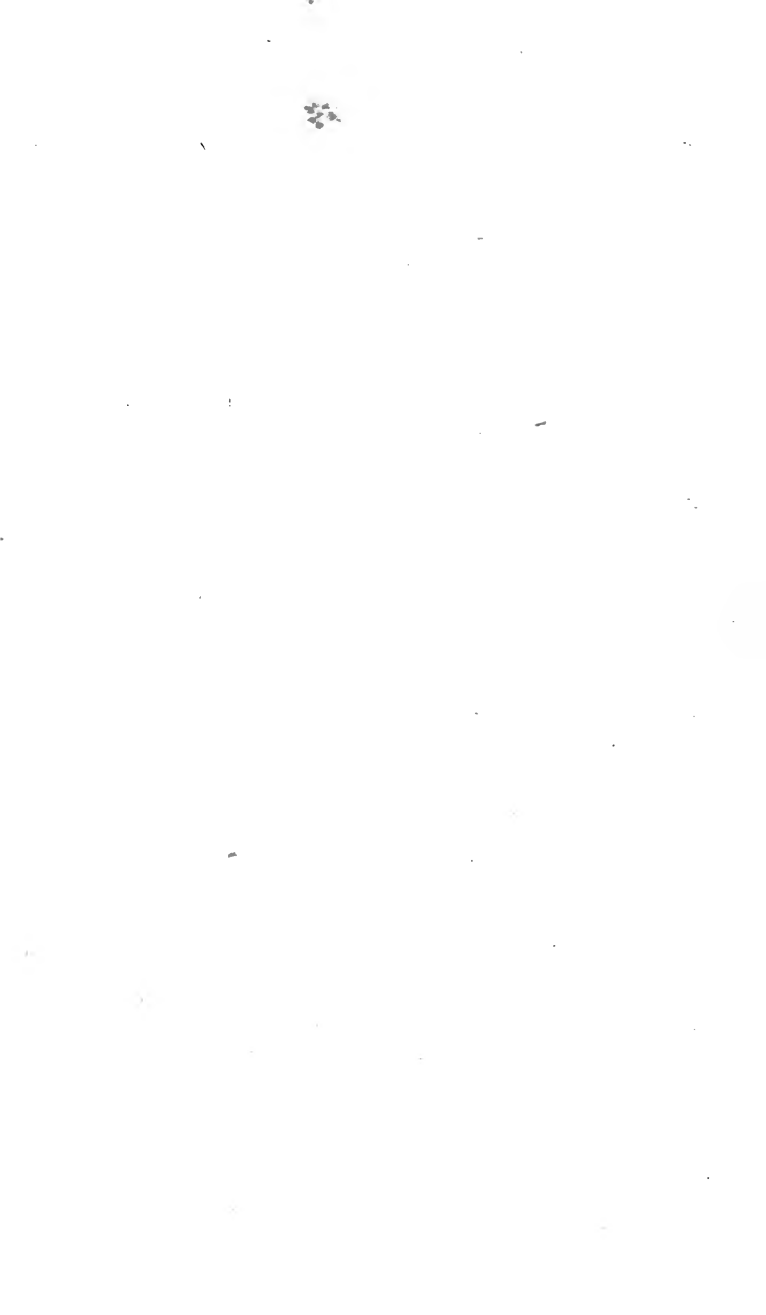
2,000 Miles on Foot:

**Walks through Great
Britain and France**

BY
E. W. FOX

WITH PORTRAIT, AND EIGHTY-SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS BY
THE AUTHOR

London and Felling-on-Tyne :
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1911.



PREFACE.

PEOPLE write books upon every conceivable topic

ERRATA.

- Page ix, line 1, *for* "Haraogate" *read* "Harrogate."
 ,, 2, line 4, *for* "invariaby" *read* "invariably."
 ,, 141, line 1, *for* "tels" *read* "tells."
 ,, 231, line 29, *for* "So it it does" *read* "So it
 does."

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Walking has always had a peculiar charm and attraction for me, my chief object in touring on foot being to see thoroughly the countries I visited, and to get among the people and out of the beaten tracks.

I have made no attempt at fine writing or finished drawing. The sketches and notes were

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xxi, line 20, for "So it does" read "So it
does."

PREFACE.

PEOPLE write books upon every conceivable topic nowadays, and perhaps it is as well they should. For more than thirty years I have been touring on foot, and during that time I have covered more than ten times the distance treated upon in these pages. I have not always made notes and sketches of my various tours; and the fact that these exist in the case of the tramps chronicled in the following pages, with the requests of friends, have involved me in a publicity which was never intended when the walks were made. I have, consequently, committed the sin—a pardonable one, I trust—of adding one more book to the publishing world's output.

Walking has always had a peculiar charm and attraction for me, my chief object in touring on foot being to see thoroughly the countries I visited, and to get among the people and out of the beaten tracks.

I have made no attempt at fine writing or finished drawing. The sketches and notes were

done off-hand and primarily as reminders of many happy days spent on foot at home and abroad, and on this account these pages may, I am aware, merit no higher eulogy than that of a chronicle of very small beer.

It remains to be stated that, as the walks were made in different years, I must beg the reader's indulgence if at times I lay myself open to the charge of repetition in any of my reflections and suggestions.

E. W. FOX.

AUCKLAND LODGE,

HARROGATE,

October 1911.

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2000 MILES ON FOOT:

Walks through Great Britain and France.

Through Normandy

(1902).

I. ST. MALO.

FOR some time past I had determined to walk in Normandy, but the difficulty was to find a genial companion. People won't walk in these days of bicycles and motors, so I had to go alone.

Walking alone is not without its advantages. You have only yourself to consult, and therefore you can carry out your plans successfully, besides being able to go as you please, which is the essence of touring on foot.

One is also the more compelled to speak the language of the country he may be in. In this way, too, you see and appreciate the manners and customs of the people, and are better received and encouraged wherever you go.

We Englishmen are prone to carry our whole atmosphere with us wherever we go, and this is not always welcome to our neighbours abroad. They are invariably agreeable and pleased to see us if we conform to their ways and respect their customs. They are ever ready to applaud and to help, particularly if we speak their language, however indifferently.

We can manage well enough with English in large continental cities, but in country places we must speak the language of the country, otherwise a tour will be shorn of half its delights.

To start with I got an excellent map of Normandy, published by Neale, of Paris, so folded that one could refer to the route without opening out the map at full—obviously a great advantage. A strong tweed suit, with breeches and stockings, and for a change an extra couple of pairs of stockings, a woollen sleeping suit, strong slippers, collars, razor, brushes, etc. Instead of a walking-stick I took an umbrella for the first time as a protection against sun and rain. It hardly looks workmanlike, but I found it very useful in the height of summer. A tin of soft soap is a good thing to take for blisters, which in hot weather will sometimes appear, even when the feet are thought to be in fine condition. The soap should be gently rubbed over the heels and toes and the stockings drawn on. This will keep the feet in

the best of condition in hot or wet weather. They must be kept scrupulously clean by washing night and morning. Then, wear thick stockings of fine wool, not worsted, getting them washed as often as you can. All the trouble will be repaid in ease and comfort of travelling.

Crossing from Southampton by night boat, I had a look at Jersey next morning, going on to St. Malo in the afternoon.

St. Malo is built on a huge mass of rock, which by the incursions of the sea has become an island united to the mainland by a "sillon," or causeway. The natives have for generations been renowned as good sailors, and have repeatedly repulsed the English. Duguay-Trouin and Cartier are names of notable Malouin sailors and discoverers.

There is a cathedral and a castle, and here is the grave of the great French writer Chateaubriand, who was born at St. Malo. During the French Revolution he emigrated to Canada, and was later on an exile in England in reduced circumstances. Always fond of travel, he has given us many fine romances founded on his travels and experiences in Asia and Africa.

There is a quaint, sombre air about St. Malo, with its narrow streets and quiet bustle, which is unique.

From St. Malo I cross by boat to Dinard, a fashionable watering-place much frequented by

English, but which hardly appeals to me in my rough suit and knapsack. It is a charming little place, rising up from the bay in terraces, with a beautiful sea of remarkable colour and brilliancy. The rocks are massed with golden seaweed, which in the sunlight gives a charming effect.

There are many small yachts reposing in the bay; and starting out this lovely June morning after a good night's rest and some excellent "café au lait," I fully appreciate everything. I swing along in the lovely sea air, passing little villas embowered in roses, with cherries now ripe and full-blown roses in profusion scenting the air everywhere.

Ploubalay is the first village I come to, where there is a Confirmation Service in the church and a procession of young girls, who seem well satisfied with themselves as they march down the village in their white muslin frocks, looking all so fresh and happy.

From Ploubalay to Dinan the walk is hot and dusty, but the heat is only a forerunner of heavy rain and a cooler state of the air altogether.

At Pleslin I stay and get an excellent lunch of omelettes, bread, and cider at a wayside cottage for eightpence. The old lady and her husband are very agreeable, and express great surprise to see me travelling afoot in these days of bikes and motors. They ask how many kilometres I can

walk in a day. I tell them sixty, and they stare; but I assure them that thirty or forty will be my average.

II. DINAN: DOL.

I reach Dinan in the afternoon. This is in Brittany, and my course lies in a north-easterly direction. I find a capital inn, where they treat me well, and stroll out in the evening to look at this prettily situated old-world town.

At Dinan are fine examples of old-time architecture, particularly in the narrow street leading down to the river. Artists are busy with brush or pencil, and there is no end of "copy" for them. There are a great many English residents in Dinan. The Castle is a great feature, and everywhere are delightful walks to serve for a week's stay. The boat from St. Malo up the Ronce is as fine a twenty mile journey as can be found in France for lovely, diversified scenery. The streets and shops are antiquated, and one sees many good examples of fine old oak for sale.

At the inn this evening I meet an agreeable American who is making a tour of the world, taking years to accomplish it. He retired from a lucrative profession early in life in order that he might see the world, its people, and their manners and customs. His conversation is very interesting and instructive.

In the morning I shoulder my knapsack and stride away merrily, crossing the magnificent viaduct over the Ronce. The long, narrow cider carts come rolling lazily along, bringing in the Breton and Norman beverage. Cornfields with heavy crops are dotted all over, with apple-trees. Here they waste no ground, but make it produce all it is capable of producing.

There has been heavy rain overnight, and now all is so fresh and sweet that one feels the true pleasure of life. The twelve-pound knapsack sits lightly as I stride away in good form, determined to get all the enjoyment I can out of my little tour; and this depends entirely upon what you put into it. As the saying is, you get out of life precisely what you put into it, neither more nor less. You reap as you sow!

The Breton women are working in the fields with the men. How frugally they live! They take their long stick-like loaf and their bottle of cider into the fields. A chunk of bread is cut off and rubbed with an onion, and upon such meagre fare they work hard and long hours the year round. Our own labourers would starve on such diet. And yet Bretons never complain. They are happy and contented, frugal, and full of religious enthusiasm.

The main roads, or Routes Nationales, are excellent, and would charm the cyclist or motorman,

but they are in places somewhat monotonous to the pedestrian, so I take the more interesting routes where I can. One gets tired of the endless rows of poplars cropped so closely, save the tuft at the top.

Woods are everywhere; indeed, they are forests. Every one burns wood. There is no coal used, except in large towns.

Many of the villages are very dirty, such as you see in Ireland. One sees a cross or crucifix everywhere, and in one village I observe a large stone cross standing close to a cesspool.

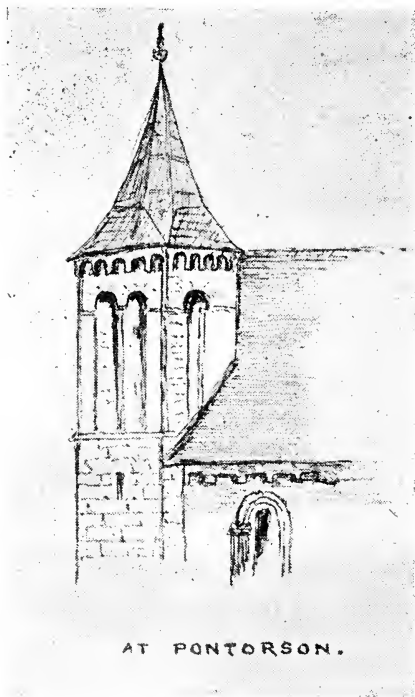
I reach Dol on Saturday afternoon somewhat wet, but after a change of underclothes and a drying I decide to put up here for the night.

Some French cyclists who have suffered more than I have from the rain are here to lunch. They express their admiration of my kit and my walking tour generally, saying they would prefer it to cycling; but they cannot walk any distance, and the bike has removed any disposition to practice walking. They are very open and explicit on this point, and I am sure it is no empty compliment which they seem to pay me.

We have an excellent lunch of cutlets and sparkling cider, and chat away gaily on various topics. One of the party speaks a little English, and seems pleased to show it.

In the afternoon I gladly visit the beautiful

church of St. Sampson, a distinctly good specimen of thirteenth century architecture, being all early Gothic, and unrestored. There are some remarkably fine pillars in the interior—a central



column with smaller ones around it, the choir being especially beautiful.

I am amused on coming out of the inn by a host of little boys in their quaint black serge

smocks playing hide-and-seek around the angles of the cathedral, their merry voices making the place ring again. Two or three stood and looked respectfully at me and said, "Viola le touriste," running off to play again. Surely they are well in touch with their church!

There are some excellent examples of old-world architecture in the shops and houses of Dol; indeed, it is a particularly quiet, quaint old town.

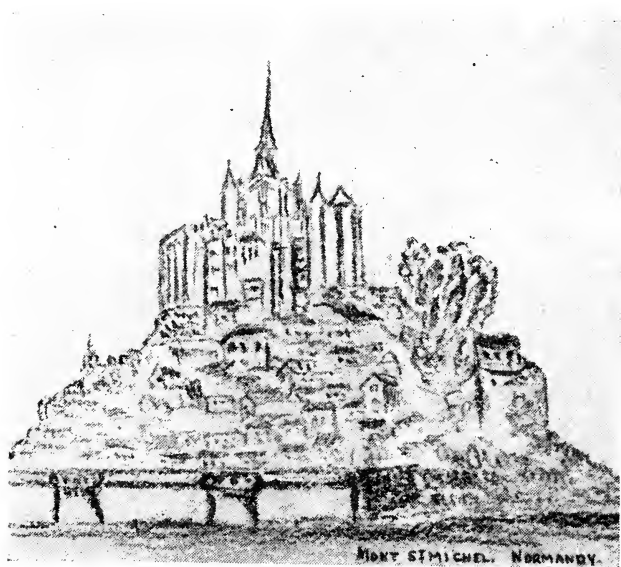
A mile or two away there is a menhir or monolith of stone surmounted by a Calvary, which is held in great veneration by the simple peasantry. It is one of many such-like to be found all over Brittany.

Next morning I am up and off in good time, for here you can breakfast early. The owners are up and about at five o'clock, so different from our own inns, where you are lucky to get anything before eight o'clock. At noon Mont St. Michel becomes 'visible and fills one with admiration. It stands out of the sea so nobly.

III. MONT ST. MICHEL: AVRANCHES.

Mont St. Michel is unsurpassed in beauty of situation; indeed, few sights can compare with its stately and majestic proportions and environment. It dates from the eighth century, when St. Michael

appeared before St. Aubert, Bishop of Avranches, and induced him to found a monastery here, where a miraculous spring was discovered gushing out of the rocks to supply the monks with water. It soon became a place of pilgrimage, and received the support of the Dukes of Normandy, especially



MONT ST. MICHEL, NORMANDY.

of our William the Conqueror. It has been besieged from time to time, and is now held by the French Republic as one of its great public monuments.

The Hotel Poulard Ainé is renowned for its

very delectable omelettes, and the landlady makes no bill, but asks you what you have had and charges accordingly.

The place is quite a little town of towers and fortifications, and has three entrance gates. There are several especially picturesque houses, where the pilgrims were lodged in the old days. The street ascends spirally, and then by a staircase with several landings to the abbey. There is a small museum containing relics in connection with the history of the place; dungeons and crypts innumerable and gruesome.

Mont St. Michel is certainly one of the prettiest and most interesting places in France, and to any one having a few days to spare is quite easy of access from England.

And so I peg away to Avranches, having the sea to my left the whole way, all very breezy and lovely. Up a long, steep hill, one of the steepest in France, and you are in Avranches.

Looking back, you have one of the grandest scenes imaginable, sea and woodland being delightfully blended, with Mont St. Michel, bathed in the setting sunlight, in the distance. I shall never forget this lovely sight. I can picture it now in all its detail as I rewrite these notes years after my visit. Extending for miles in the beautiful, entrancing, golden light, I shall never forget it. Again and again I sat on the hill and took

in all its glory, and thanked my good fortune for the opportunity of visiting such scenes, and for the ability and the disposition to enjoy it all.

The streets of Avranches are strewn with greenery and flowers; they are keeping some religious festival here to-day.

Mine host at the inn makes me most comfortable. He is a portly man, talkative, full of good humour and good spirits. He mixes the salad with the gravity of a Prime Minister, and during dinner he is everywhere in attendance upon his guests, whom he seeks to please in every way. How very seldom we see such an excellent man in our country! The dining-room is full of visitors, and he gives us a real good dinner, helping, serving, and chatting good-humouredly with his customers, mostly residents in the old town, who walk out to dine, unlike us, who invariably dine "chez nous." Two French officers from the barracks are next to me at dinner; handsome, well set-up gentlemen, aristocrats in manner, so unlike the others. No shrugging of shoulders or grimace, but a calm, dignified expression, an easy grace, the outcome of breeding, education, culture, and a knowledge of the world. I greatly admired these men. They were most agreeable and courteous to me, evidently considering my walking tour as a sporting thing to do. One does score in this respect, as I have often found since I

began touring on foot twenty years ago. A man may ride a bicycle a thousand miles, and no one seems to think it worth noticing; but if he walks a hundred or two miles, people seem to consider it a great feat.

Of course walking is harder work, mile for mile, than cycling, the proportion to me being perhaps three to one, to some five to one. But this is not all. You require more patience and determination in order to carry out your tour successfully; and your powers of observation, as well as your powers of endurance, are put more severely to the test. It is a mental as well as a physical test, hence its superiority over all other forms of locomotion. Perhaps men are born walkers, if they are born anything. I have often heard people say they have tired their minds as much as their bodies in their attempt at going on a walking tour. They have overdone it to begin with—a great mistake. Take plenty of time and plenty of rest—that is the secret.

On leaving the inn at Avranches next morning the landlord showed me his aviary and his rose garden; and pinning a rose in my coat, he walked out for half a mile to put me on my way, chatting gaily all the time; and with a cordial handshake wished me “bon voyage.” Not many English innkeepers would take so much interest in their customers.

IV. GRANVILLE.

I next make for Granville, avoiding the main road and taking the more picturesque coast road by way of Vains and Genes, according to mine host's directions. One sees a great deal more of a country on foot than in any other way; and if you don't stay to look at the orthodox sites mentioned in the guide-books, you have already seen twenty sights on your way of equal beauty which the guide-books know not of, and you are in constant touch with the people in the villages, on the roads, and in the fields, all of whom are glad to talk with you and to tell you something interesting and worth knowing. This is the only way to learn the manners and customs of a country.

St. Jean le Thomas is pretty, beautifully wooded, close to the sea, and full of roses. It resembles Ambleside in appearance, but roses are everywhere, thousands of cartloads of them, and there are some pretty villas.

As I move along I still have Mont St. Michel in view. It is showery, so up goes my umbrella. I rather like the conditions.

At Carolles I stay at a wayside "auberge," and they give me a princely lunch of soles, omelettes, and sparkling cider, all clean and well served by

the daughter of the house—a pretty girl with a fine head of light hair and eyes like damsons; an unusually pleasing style of beauty. She saw I admired her, and showed to advantage many little arts and graces which were fascinating. And so she chatted away to me whilst I ate my lunch in an embrasure of the huge kitchen, everything being hot and done to a turn. What a lunch! and how hard it was to turn out and walk!

Half an hour's tramping, and down came the rain in torrents. In so exposed a place my umbrella was very little protection, as the rain swept over the sea like a hurricane. But my whipcord suit has yet to be dealt with, and my boots are strong, roomy, and well sewn, capable of great resistance and immense strain. Therefore the rain has some opposition, particularly in that feeling of robustness and cheerfulness which constant exercise out of doors can alone produce. You laugh at rain and storm, and heed them not; and here the man on foot has the advantage over the cyclist, or even the man on horseback: for, given good, hard condition, there is no weather which can stop the pedestrian from enjoying his walk.

It clears in time and I march away, drying as I go along. Ere long I come across a cyclist very wet, ploughing his way laboriously through the mud.

“C'est mieux a pied, n'est ce pas,” I ventured,

but he said nothing. I saw him at Coutances the next day and we had a long chat. He recognized me, and laughingly alluded to my remark, saying that I had the best of it on foot that day.

The sea is very fine on approaching Granville, and as I march into the town my clothes are quite dry. I salute a soldier *à la militaire*, and he returns the salute with evident pleasure.

Again I find myself in good hands at my inn, where, among other things, I get the best roast veal I ever tasted. I compliment the cook on its excellence and have a long talk with Madame, who speaks very deliberately and is an altogether agreeable and most polite old lady.

Granville is a seaport built on a cape or headland projecting into the English Channel, and is fortified.

I notice nothing remarkable about its churches. Fishing and shipbuilding seem to occupy its inhabitants.

Next day I am up at six, and after my "café au lait" and eggs, am off up the hill with the glorious sea to my left. Women are seen everywhere working in the fields, and their hard work seems to make them coarse and ungainly in their movements, although there is something attractive about them which is not inartistic. Their golden brown complexions help all this.

One frequently sees notice-boards announcing

that begging is strictly forbidden in the district. Here you rarely come across beggars. How different in England, where you can scarcely walk a mile on the high-roads without being accosted by mendicants, some of them with not the sweetest of dispositions.

The women in Normandy look pretty in their white caps, but without them they are mostly very plain looking. The cap makes all the difference, just as it does with our hospital nurses, who we are apt to think look more attractive in uniform.

At Quettreville for threepence halfpenny I get a litre of cider, bread and butter, and walk better on it than I did yesterday on my big lunch. Indeed, my old established rule of little to eat and drink during the day is best, as I have proved times out of number.

Of course if you don't get a substantial breakfast one must get something to eat at midday; but drink little and you will walk all the better.

A man who has accustomed himself to require a meal during the day, save what he can easily carry in his pocket, is no good for travel in out-of-the-way places nor for sport. Nor is he likely to endure hard exercise for a prolonged period.

Given a good substantial breakfast and you want nothing more than a piece of bread and butter or cheese, and little or no liquid, till dinner.

But, being mortals, we are not satisfied with what we merely need. We want many extras and much pleasure out of eating, naturally. Some folk go so far even as to overdo this, and so kill themselves.

They have very primitive notions at the inns or "auberges" hereabout, and expect you to carry a knife wherewith to cut your bread and cheese.

All the cattle and horses are tethered in the fields grazing. When they have eaten up a space around them an old woman appears and pulls up the iron tethering, and with a heavy mallet drives it down again further on.

The cattle are linked together in batches, and in this awkward, punishing way, they are rushed along the roads by the drovers.

Apples are growing abundantly on all sides. This is the true apple country—"le pays du pomme."

V. COUTANCES.

The entrance to Coutances is very quaint, as you wend your way up through narrow streets with fortress-like buildings on either side, sombre, heavy, and quiet. The approach resembles that up to the Minster at Lincoln, and the streets are narrow but picturesque, and consequently full of interest.

It was here I saw the cyclist whom I met at Carolles in the rain. He again recognized me, and we had another long talk. He advised me to see Falaise, renowned for its association with William the Conqueror. "Eh bien, Monsieur, *notre* Guillaume le Conquerant," I replied. "Mais Mons je suis Normand," he said laughingly, and we shook hands cordially at parting.

Coutances seen from afar looks very magnificent with its cathedral standing out of its verdant ramparts. It seems rather a dull place inside, and there are many priests here to care for the souls of the faithful.

The cathedral is noteworthy for its fine sculpture and its dignified spires and towers, the central tower being especially beautiful. I notice a



newsvendor's shop, all so snug and confiding, built into an angle of the cathedral. You see the same thing in Spain. The whole district is lovely, and the pretty walks and lanes remind one of Devonshire. The inhabitants of these old Norman towns have a peculiar tone in their way of speaking, which is rather nice and musical. The ending of each sentence is, as it were, turned up into a sing-song tone, pleasant to hear.

I am up early again and off by seven o'clock, but am wrongly directed out of the town. I had previously made my cast, as I generally do, and it turned out to be right. Some of these good people know not their own district.

Some Frenchmen at dinner last night were making fun of an old man, an Englishman, who was doing his best to speak French. They were excessively rude, as French people as well as English certainly can be—at least the commercial class. I have seen examples of their bad manners, such as you do not see in the French upper classes, of course, nor yet among the peasantry. I thought what a great gulf was fixed between the manners of these “gentry” and the two soldiers I dined with at Avranches.

Touring on foot is full of incident, and even on the most monotonous road, if you cease to enjoy your surroundings, you can read as you walk along, and this is often an agreeable change,

particularly when reading in the language of the country you are in. You thus keep in touch with things and with the spirit of the people completely. I often find it very enjoyable to pass an hour in this manner.

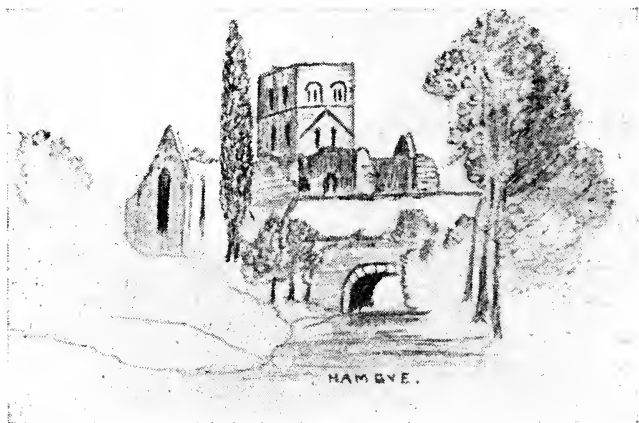
The roadsides here are often sown with red clover. No ground is wasted; the Normandy folks are far more economical, all round, than we are. Everywhere are apple-trees in blossom, thousands of them, and of course cider is the drink of the country. The people say it is anti-rheumatic, and in this respect is the opposite to beer in its action.

I walk through an immense forest, which occupied a great part of the day. About noon I was seated on a fallen tree, eating my bread and cheese, when I felt something near me, and looking round saw a huge wild boar. He stood still staring at me for a moment, and as I never moved a muscle he suddenly turned away, crashed through the undergrowth and disappeared, much to my relief, for I had no "arms" whatever and was hardly prepared for an encounter with such an ugly customer. So I finished my lunch in peace.

At Magny this afternoon I get some cider and bread and butter. They again ask me if I have a knife, but no ordinary knife would cut a slice from the big cushion-like loaf with its crust as hard as flint. The table-top was bare and of

walnut, beautifully polished. The old dame asked me to be careful not to scratch it. I never saw a more handsome, massive table.

I notice a fine tall clock with massive brass pendulum. You see many of these grandfather clocks in Normandy. The woodwork of the cottages is generally good, far superior to what



HAMBYE, NORMANDY.

we have at home, and you often see a really handsome wooden staircase leading to the upper rooms, black with age, and of what seems to be fir.

For my cider and bread and butter the old lady would have charged me eightpence, which I knew was excessive. “Mais Madame je ne suis

pas riche Anglais," knowing well that she was putting me on that footing. She at once said, "Dix sous! monsieur est Allemande," alluding to the German propensity for bargaining, which I thought very good.

I saw a huge block in the foyer, or chimney-piece, with a chopping bill stuck in it. A little girl had just chopped some twigs to make a fire for the baby's food. The old dame told me it was her daughter's, who was in Paris. Had I ever been to Paris? Yes, I had been there frequently, and might walk there now. Whereupon she looked incredulous, amazed. These unusually large open fireplaces or "foyers" are very comfortable. Here the "pot au feu" or stew-pan is always in evidence, and is the mainstay of the household food. Why cannot the English girl learn this "ever-on-the-hob" stew-pan-business from her French sister, and be one in a hundred or thousand to work out her salvation as a wife and mother to either a rich or poor Englishman? They can always give you something nourishing, and generally savoury, out of this most economical concoction, which is a national dish in France. Nothing is wasted. The poorest people understand cooking. They say a French family can live comfortably on what an English family wastes. Cooking is made a study in every household, consequently the lower and middle

classes are better fed all round than we are with our messy, badly-cooked food.

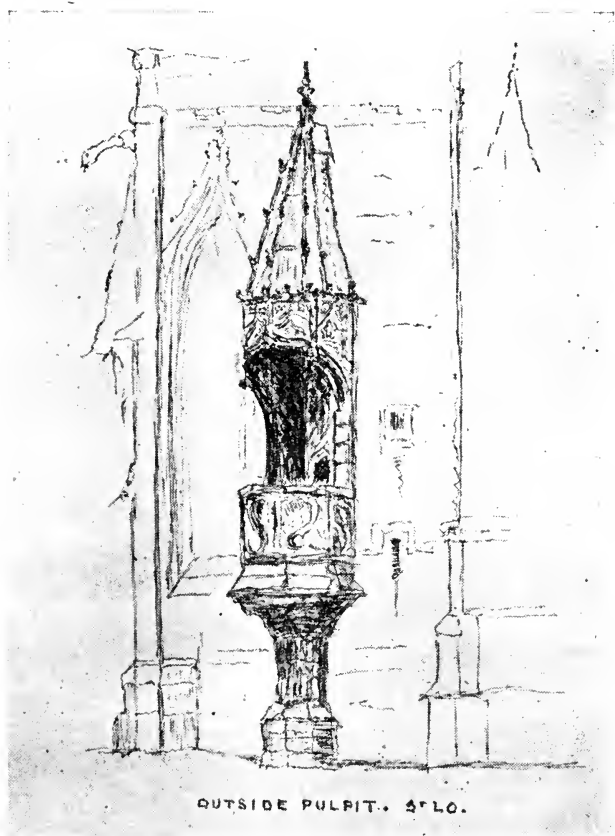
Our working classes would do well to learn the economy of French cooking, but they are hardly likely to take the trouble. French people seem to take infinite pains in doing their housework well, consequently the children of the poorer people are better brought up, and have better teeth, hair, and eyesight than our working people have. They are also better behaved, better mannered and disciplined, and certainly happier than are our lower orders. Indeed, in many respects we are far behind our neighbours, the French, certainly so far as our lower and lower middle classes go. I am more convinced of this every time I go abroad.

As I peg away I notice large stacks of fagots opposite the cottages. There is no coal, nothing but wood is burned in the country districts. So is obtained the charcoal for cooking, etc.

Again and again the people express surprise at my walking. They cannot understand how any one can travel afoot for preference. This is natural with the country people, who work hard, and are constantly on their feet on the land. Riding would necessarily appeal to them, and walking would only be undertaken as a penance by the more ardent Roman Catholics among them.

At St. Gilles I chat with an old man I

had overtaken on the way. We walk along leisurely till he ventured a word or two in English,



telling me he lived in London twenty years ago, but had forgotten the language. He was

delighted to say a word or two in English. I asked him if farming was profitable, and he assured me they could live comfortably by it. He sent his butter to the London market, where he got a good price for the fine-quality article. He was a grand old fellow of seventy and very happy and contented, comparing most favourably with farmers in England in a similar position; indeed, the French peasant is far better off than our small farmer.

V. ST. LO: BAYEUX.

St. Lo is reached in the afternoon. It is a charming place commanding a fine view of the surrounding country. Facing The Square is the beautiful cathedral, one of the finest in Normandy, with two noble spires and towers. Here is an outside pulpit, from whence the Bishop used to deliver his charges, spiritual and temporal. There is also a famous statue in the cathedral called "La Vierge du Pilier," which is held in great veneration by the faithful. A butcher's shop is built into an angle of the cathedral, which hardly gives the same impression as the newsvendor's shop at Coutances. It looks coarse and out of place.

There is a fine old timbered house near the cathedral, one of the finest I ever saw; they call

it "La Maison de Dieu." At the hotel in the evening sits a distinctly disagreeable Frenchman, a "commis-voyageur," or commercial traveller, who repeatedly throws out disagreeable remarks and insinuations about England, our King, and the English people and country generally. He has two friends with him who seem amused at his remarks, so I decide not to argue with the gentleman, but ask them all to have a drink with me. They all comply readily enough, two drinking my health, but the one with the bad liver drinks his mixture gloomily, and perhaps at heart is disgusted with himself and his bad breeding—a not uncommon habit with low-bred people. I manage to smile away all the unpleasantness, and harmony prevails for the rest of the evening. There is every opportunity for a row. However, a little timely diplomacy averts it, and the malcontent is eventually outruled by his companions.

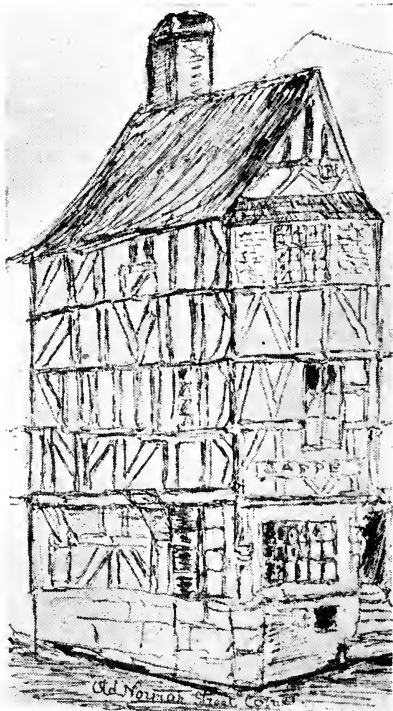
From St. Lo I go to Bayeux, making through the extensive and truly fine forest of Cerisy, which I believe belongs to the French Republic.

There is something imposing and soul-stirring amidst these great forests, to which we are unaccustomed in our own country. They mostly belong to the Government, I am told, and were probably acquired at the Revolution, their owners quitting the country during those stirring times,

and consequently forfeiting their estates. The French Republic thus became possessed of enormous properties, which form an asset of their National Debt, to which we, in our own case, can find no parallel.

The continued rain prevents me from enjoying the forest scenery as I otherwise should. Still, I appreciate the miles of majestic trees of every variety and the profound stillness which reigns throughout.

The rain clears in the afternoon, and finding a cottage at the edge of the forest, I buy some bread and sardines and a bottle of sparkling cider, and feel a new man again. My clothes dry in the breeze



AT BAVEUX.

and sunshine, and I march into Bayeux dry as a bone, as the saying is.

Bayeux is a very old town, many of the houses being built of wood and plaster. The large cathedral is said to be the oldest place of Christian worship in Normandy, dating from the eleventh century, when Odo, the Conqueror's brother, was Bishop of Bayeux. The towers of the cathedral are remarkably fine, and the interior contains exquisitely worked pillars, etc.

The great attraction at Bayeux, however, is the famous tapestry, which is said to be the work of Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror. It is framed under glass and is fixed round the walls of a room in the Public Library. It is a web or roll of canvas, upon which is worked in coloured woollen thread a continuous representation of the events of the Norman Conquest of England. The stitches consist of lines of coloured worsted laid side by side and bound down by cross-stitches. The parts representing flesh are left untouched and show the brown holland tint which the linen ground has acquired by age. It shows the costumes, armour, manners and customs of the times. The work is about half a yard wide and eighty yards long.

There are some curious old houses in Bayeux, many being very picturesque and interesting. Altogether I was particularly charmed with this

fine old world town, and was delighted in pottering about its quaint old streets.

At Bretteville I secure some excellent sparkling cider. There is a crowd of men drinking in the "auberge," who eye me with surprise from head to foot. Much of the cider is poor, flat stuff, but it seems to satisfy the natives, who are easily pleased.

Next morning is wet, and I am delayed starting out till eleven. Even then some cyclists are standing at the inn door undecided whether to start or not, for the roads were not sufficiently inviting to them, although quite all right for my thick boots; so I shoulder my knapsack, and stride down the old street in the fresh cool air, feeling full of joy, and desire for new worlds (of walks) to conquer.

I feel quite attached to the old town of Bayeux, and begin to wonder what Caen, which is my next stopping-place, will be like. It is not a long journey, and the country is fine. About half-way I am surprised at the sight of a large brown bear in the fields a little way from the road. On seeing me Bruin makes slowly towards me, when, happily, up jumps his keeper, who had evidently been lying down out of sight, but whose appearance was quite welcome to me.

With no other incident save an occasional chat

on the roadside with farmers or workmen I reach Caen in the evening.

VI. CAEN: DIVES: IRONVILLE: HAVRE.

Caen is a large town, and was a place of importance two centuries before the Norman Conquest. William the Conqueror and his Queen Matilda lived here and improved the



town considerably. At a distance it looks most imposing with its innumerable spires and towers.

The famous Caen stone is found here, and the houses are built of it, many of them being excellent specimens of the old time architecture. The red grey tone of the buildings, broken here and there by trees, and the beautiful towers and spires

rising behind them, make up a picture which I shall not easily forget. I am in love with Caen at first sight, with its admirable old timbered houses and its quaintness and respectability everywhere. The whole place is full of history and romance, and I could wander about its old-time streets for a week; but, I am on a walking tour and have many places to see.

The "Abbaye aux Hommes" and the "Abbaye aux Dames" were founded, the former by "the Conqueror," the latter by his Queen Matilda. They are both wonderful specimens of rare Norman architecture.

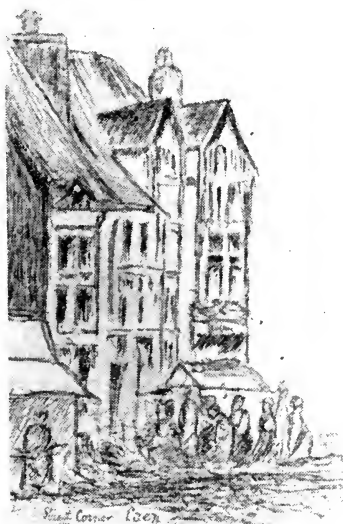
The "Hotel Dieu," the "Hotel des Monnaies," and the "Chateau," besides many other wonders, all claim attention, and would keep one well entertained for a week or two at this fine old Norman city of Caen, which breathes history at every turn. There is a peculiar charm about it and about its people which I greatly appreciate. I like their tone of speaking, with its unusual, turned-up inflection, which is rather musical and charming.

Of course I find a good inn here where everything suits me immensely, and that feature alone adds greatly to the charm of a place. Norman inns are all good. You can always rely on a capital bed and an excellent dinner, to say nothing of the luncheons, which are quite equal to dinners.

Your Frenchman lives well. He would not put up with the incessant ham and eggs and cold meat of the usual English country inn. I have heard one or two of them speak of their travels in England and the meagre fare and excessive charges of our inns.

In France they give you wine free, but in England you never get free beer to your lunch or dinner, and you even have to ask specially for a glass of water. No, they say our inns are drink shops, and attribute our national intemperance to this factor, and to the indifference and bad cooking generally.

We are, certainly, improving; but, there is still much room for improvement. Our hotel people must be more agreeable and wishful to please; they must not be afraid to take the trouble and pains which are inseparable from good cooking and good inn accommodation. Foreigners have got a good footing in our large hotels, which are better



AT CAEN.

managed in consequence; and I know of cases where they have taken over country inns, and where you may now get excellent coffee and dainty dishes instead of cold mutton and pickled onions, and very frequently in the North not even these.

Yes, I love Caen! I think so as I saunter through its old streets this morning, feeling quite well and fresh after a good night's rest in the cosiest and cleanest of beds, and an excellent breakfast at seven o'clock with such coffee as we know not of in England.

The innkeepers in France roast the coffee beans themselves and grind them every morning; that is part of the secret of their excellent coffee. Proper making with fresh, boiling milk is the rest. How the English innkeeper would stare at all this trouble! He wouldn't do it, not he—and at that unearthly time of the morning. No; he'd starve first!

I take the right bank of the river Orne by way of Ranville, Sallenelles, Cabourg and Dives, all very pretty places. This road is only fit for walking; it is wet and in a bad state, but preferable to the main road, and the coast is charming all the way. You frequently see notice-boards in the woods along the roadsides—"Chasse gardée," so I take it that in the absence of such notice you may shoot anywhere. Free shooting, like free fishing, is not likely to be worth much.

By degrees I am walking out of the "cidre" country into the district where "bière" is sold and generally drunk—a light kind similar to the German *läger* beer.

Houlgatte is a likely place to bring children to for the sands and sea-bathing, and Dives is very pretty. Here it was where William the Conqueror assembled his fleet for the invasion of England, but since then the sea has receded quite a mile, and dry land now marks the place where the Conqueror's ships anchored in 1066.

There is a very fine, picturesque inn here, "L'Hotellerie de Guillaume le Conquerant," with an excellent courtyard surrounded by open galleries, carved rafters, sculptured reliefs, and outside staircases festooned with roses. Methought how I should like to put up here and stay for a week or so. I warrant everything in that hostelry will be of the best.

The village contains old timbered houses, one of them elegantly carved with figures of knights and monks, all very curious. There is also a grand old church, the massive central arches dating from the Conquest. The sculptured stile in the churchyard is both quaint and rare.

The country around Houlgatte resembles our Yorkshire scenery. You see any number of motor cars, most of them going at a great pace. The French are evidently far in advance of us in

motoring, but we shall catch up to them—maybe. There is an abbey church at St. Pierre, of the thirteenth century, which is fine work.

The season at Villars has not yet commenced; all is very subdued and respectable. Everything is good at my hotel—the waiting, the lodging, and the food. Two old-maid sisters have just taken it over, and they are very anxious to make an impression upon the visitors. They tell me the season will shortly commence, when they will have “*beaucoup de beau monde*” there. And I stroll about this evening admiring the very beautiful sunset and the pleasant restfulness of everything.

Next day I leave for Havre, walking through the fashionable Trouville, which is pretty but of little interest, more especially out of the season. There will soon be seen here crowds of pretty women in every hue of fantastic bathing costume, and many who are decidedly not pretty. Such a sight will charm the Parisian far more than the lovely surrounding country with its grand Norman abbeys and churches.

From here I take a boat across the estuary of the Seine to Havre, where I notice a number of very fine yachts moored in the harbour. I don't agree with Delavigne, that after Constantinople no place is more beautiful than Havre. It is a large, fortified commercial town at the mouth of

the Seine and dates from the sixteenth century, being founded by Francis the First. There is a tower standing to his memory. The town is entered by several gates and drawbridges and the streets are now modernized, there being no particularly interesting buildings. There is a fine harbour, and it is called the Liverpool of France.

I am not so fortunate here in my hotel accommodation; but it is infinitely better, so far as the food and cooking goes, than most English inns I have stayed at. The old landlady speaks English fluently. She seems delighted to talk to me, and asks innumerable questions about England, and particularly about London, where she had lived many years ago and married an Englishman. She is now a widow, and had been for many long years.

I meet a young Englishman who lived at the inn and was learning the engineering business here. He is delighted with the country and the people.

Walking through those little seaside places yesterday, I was often struck by the jerry-built villas, far worse in construction than what we find here in England. The French people rent these gimcrack places for the season in preference to staying in lodgings, like so many English families do.

The roads are in bad order, owing to the unusually wet weather. Indeed, I could not have

hit upon a more rainy season for my tramp. The friendly umbrella is useful, and I don't trouble about its unsportsmanlike appearance here as much as I should at home. My clothes being, as I have said, of strong whipcord cloth, withstand the repeated dryings without losing their shape, and they have been well put to the test. Occasionally I have felt, or thought I felt, a certain element of dampness in my bed, but have slept well and got up fit and ready to face another day.

What big women one sees all through Normandy! How substantial they are wherever you go in Normandy; and they have generally a somewhat heavy expression—solid, but not disagreeable; it simply lacks that lightness and gaiety which you often see elsewhere in France.

On the whole, the physique of the men and women is not equal to ours in towns and rural districts. Under the same conditions we can breed a finer, more active lot of men and women in England than exists in France; and given the same careful cooking as the French have, we should outdistance them greatly. We have much to congratulate ourselves upon, but we certainly do not make the most of our opportunities in our domestic economy. The State does more for our working population in seeing to the sanitary conditions of their dwellings, to their water supply, drainage, etc., than is done for the poorer people

in France; but the latter do more for themselves, and take greater care and pains in feeding and bringing up their children than our working classes do. There are no better, no more careful, hard-working mothers in the world than you find all over France. Their attachment to their children has no parallel in our own country.

The working classes in France are poorer than ours, but they are more economical and more careful in administering their resources, and they are not afraid of work. They rise early, open and clean out their shops and places of business at an hour when most English people are lying in bed. They take endless pains in order to make the most of everything, and consequently they are always employed and decidedly happier and more cheerful. They spend considerably less in drink than our working people do, in spite of it being a wine-drinking country. Drunkenness there is in France, but not nearly equal to what obtains in our country. In France they seem to have more resources, and consequently are not so prone to fly to drink. Then again, the light wine and cider tend to promote temperance. Teetotalers are unknown. I once alluded to beer as being our national drink, when a Frenchman interrupted me by saying that tea was now the national drink of Great Britain, and we should suffer in consequence. It is a pity he did not taunt us,

as the Italians do, with "Drink beer—think beer."

I come across two English cyclists at the inn who are starting a tour with woeful faces on account of the wretched roads. They speak no French, and are, consequently, bound up in each other's company, and to all appearances not likely to profit much in seeing the manners and customs of the country. Wherever one went the other accompanied him. They seem inseparably glued to each other, and suck their pipes in oblivious indifference to all around them. Needless to say, these two young men are a source of much amusement and good-natured wonderment to the people at the inn. I am appealed to by the host, who laughingly asks me if we had many such solitary gentry with us. I therefore undertook the task of pulling them out of themselves, and soon they were laughing and enjoying the fun like jolly good fellows, vowing to set to and learn French directly they got home. But why not set-to here? I suggested. And so I lend them my guide as a start, which pleases them greatly, for they had neither map nor plan, and I could very well do without mine.

It is downright stupidity, to say nothing of vulgarity, for English people to conduct themselves in this manner when travelling abroad. They should sink their prejudices and fall in

with things as they arise, and be prepared to get the greatest amount of pleasure and enjoyment which it is possible to get out of each day. Instead of shouting for "eggs and bacon," take the "café au lait" breakfast, which is an institution in the country. We should do this, even as a matter of good breeding, as showing respect and appreciation of a national custom. Be prepared to take things as we find them, and never criticize or show ignorance of the world by prejudice or intolerance of any kind. Thus do we learn something every day, besides keeping on good terms with all we meet and getting the most out of life.

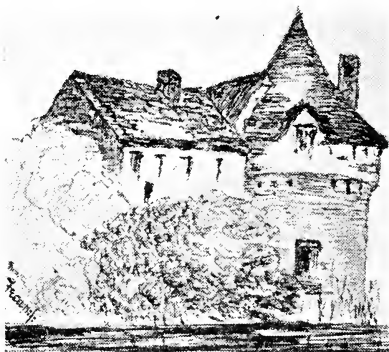
I tramp on, and down comes the rain again and overpowers my umbrella, so I take shelter in a convenient cave. Resting in the cave, I feel the weight of my knapsack for the first time on this tour; but I am in good form, and another eight miles will bring me to Etretat, my resting-place for the night.

VII. ETRETAT: FECAMP.

It is a delightful walk all along the coast. Etretat is very pretty in its little bay, and is a resort of artists. The cliffs are charming, and in the different lights you get most beautiful colouring.

The setting sun this evening gives a picture which I shall not easily forget.

At Etretat is the renowned "Aiguille d'Etretat," a cone-like rock standing out alone in the sea. Surely this is the famous "Aiguille Creuse," on which is founded much of the romance of Arsène Lupin, the gentleman-robber whose adventures have recently been read by the sensational novel-reading public of France and elsewhere.



NEAR FECAMP, NORMANDY.

Beyond the Aiguille, in the cliff, is the platform called "La Chambre des Demoiselles," from the legend of three beautiful sisters carried off by the Knight of Filleville, who, refusing his

blandishments, were thrown by him over the cliff at a point where their harmless apparition is said to be seen to this day.

My clothes are soaked when I reach the inn at Etretat, but I go to bed and get mine host to "mettez-les dans la four" (put them in the oven), for he stares so and wonders how to dry them. In two hours they are comfortably

dried, and I am happy again and free to go out into the village, which charms me very much. The inhabitants seem a kindly lot of people altogether as I stroll about among them, receiving here and there a kindly greeting, which is always acceptable and much appreciated by the traveller. It puts one on good terms at once, and makes all the difference to one's estimate of the place. It would be well if we English people would bear this in mind whenever we have foreigners visiting our country. The roar of the sea and an occasional word or two from one shop-keeper to another in the village street is all I hear this quiet summer evening.

After dinner mine host joins me to have a chat over "*un petit verre*." He is a public man, and takes a great interest in public matters. Would I explain to him our system of taxation and how our local rates are levied and collected? he asks. This is what might be called a "*tall order*"; but, I endeavour during the evening to give him the desired information. I find it no easy task, as he understands not a word of English, and one has to go a good bit out of the way in order to find terms in French for many ideas. However, he seems well satisfied, and courteously thanks me for the information. I am afraid I was too tired to ask him for a similar explanation of French taxation, and was glad to get to

bed to profound sleep, which the pedestrian invariably enjoys.

If ever I have the opportunity I shall come and stay at Etretat and sketch; it is most interesting from a pen-and-pencil point of view. And so I leave it reluctantly.



TOWER AT FECAMP.

From Etretat I make along the coast to Fecamp, renowned for its Benedictine monastery, where they make the famous liqueur. This morning there is plenty of sunshine, but the roads are heavy and wet. There is a fine valley, with a magnificent view of sea and

beautifully wooded country. I was getting sick of the continued rain; and revelling as I do in the sunshine, it is all the more welcome. I pass a villa called "Villa Orphée," and at once think

of Offenbach. Trolling out a refrain from his "Orphée aux Enfers," I come across the "Villa Offenbach," and so I peg away to the place of Benedictine liqueur, with its great monastic church of St. Trinité, dating from the Norman Conquest. The central tower is of great beauty, and the interior claims every attention.

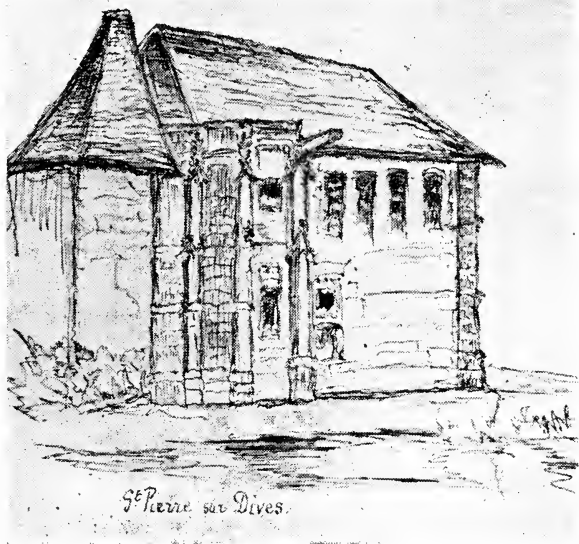
Here is a stone which bears an imprint, said to be the footprint of the angel who assisted at the dedication of the church. Here also is a receptacle which is said to contain a portion of the blood of Christ. This is a great object of pilgrimage. One sees, too, some fine examples of wood-carving, which to me, who has tried his hand at this interesting and useful art, is instructive.

The country around Fecamp is rather interesting. The approach to Cany is pretty, with its wooded hills resembling some of our dale scenery in Yorkshire. From Cany, up among trees and having a fine valley on your right, is one of the prettiest bits of country I have walked through on this tour. Hills and valleys are the chief charm of a walk, and are exhilarating alike to mind and body. It is the dull, straight roads which weary one.

VIII. ST. VALERY EN CAUX.

I reach this pretty sea-bathing place at half-past six after a hard day's walk of thirty-four

miles, the longest day of the tour, but I am not in the least degree fatigued. I get to a most comfortable hotel, where everything is of the best, with reasonable charges, and the most courteous landlord and landlady. For dinner we



ST. PIERRE, DIVES.

have fish cooked in chablis, which is excellent, and many other good things follow; and the wine, which is, as usual in the case of "vin ordinaire" or "vin du pays," included in the dinner, is of good quality, both the red and the white.

St. Valery is a considerable seaside place with casino and concert room, and the approach to it through an avenue of fine trees is pretty. It stands between two cliffs at the end of a valley, and is noted for its fishing. There are no buildings of note except the church, which is of the fifteenth century.

My next day's tramp is to Dieppe, still keeping to the coast, through Veules and Varengeville, pretty bathing places and delightful country. Veules is exceedingly pretty, nestling among trees in its little valley. A great many artists are attracted here by its picturesque position. There is a fine old church and cemetery, and actually a casino in so small a place. The sea as I gaze at it is as smooth as glass, and all is bathed in sunshine and full of repose.

Up the hill to Pourville, amongst greenery and magnificent hedgerows such as one rarely sees elsewhere. A young lady cyclist is toiling up the hill wearing the divided skirt, an innovation about which there is much talk just now in England. She is too substantial, however, to look well in it, and appears both amusing and funny; one has to laugh in a subdued manner.

As I swing along towards my journey's end I again wonder whether other people find as much pleasure in this outdoor life, where you are in touch with Nature and so free and independent.

Walking, or rather touring on foot, has gone out of fashion, but I think sometimes that in spite of bicycles and motor cars it will again be resorted to as the best form of outdoor exercise one can take. My experience is that walking keeps you in better form, physically and mentally, than any other exercise. The time so spent is well laid out, and is productive of great good.

Lord Masham, who is nearly ninety, says he owes his excellent health and his unusual activity and alertness of mind and body to eating little and walking a great deal all his lifetime. I must confess, however, that when the day's tramp is over I often eat more than a little; but it always agrees with me, and it is a pleasure fairly earned, and consequently appreciated to the fullest extent. Two substantial meals a day, however, will always serve me; and I find that more than this is superfluous, and does not bring the happiest results. On the whole, you don't think about these things when touring on foot. Of course you do feel hunger every day, and take care to get well fed, but you are in such fine form with constant exercise and constant change of air and scenery and incident, that one can eat and enjoy everything which is set before him. Indigestion and sleeplessness, worry and anxiety, are unknown; and surely to attain this is worth a great deal of sacrifice.

Walking alone may appear uninteresting, but in reality it is nothing of the kind. You can do as you please, take your own pace, go this way or that, stay here or there, just as the whim or the circumstances dictate. More than this, you talk more to the people you meet, and thus get a great deal more information and are in better touch with those around you, learning more of their manners and customs.

People will approach you and tell you things when you are alone which they would not do otherwise. I have experienced this at inns and elsewhere. The landlord hesitates to intrude when two or more are present. He prefers to leave you to your own talk, and this applies everywhere, as I have found repeatedly. Then again, to have a friend for weeks walking daily shoulder to shoulder is not without its trying time. At least you must be possessed of a great deal in common, and even then the conversation cannot help dragging from time to time, and is not generally furthering the best interests of the tour. I have tried both, and have concluded that if one wishes to see the country, its features and customs; if you would stop here and there, and talk to the people, and be in touch with them; if you wish to rest where and when you like, to walk slow or fast, to loiter and sketch, or make notes or make love, or stand on your

head or do anything else, ridiculous or sublime—then go alone. One can then do as he likes, and this is the essence, the great charm of a walking tour. One thing is imperative, you *must* carry your knapsack with you; for this is the key to all your independence. You may then stay where you are or leave, just as the fancy takes you. I have tried sending luggage on, and my experience is you never get it when and where you want it. At any rate it is a tie, and sometimes a worry. Certain centres, which you are sure to visit, might be used for a supply of under-garments, which may be sent to you by post. You can then post home all you don't require; but the sack with your change, your brushes and things in it, must be as much part and parcel of you as your own skin. Then all will go well. And so with all this wonderful philosophy of travel I spin down the long hill into Dieppe, and my tramp of some three to four hundred miles all told is at an end. I stand in better form than when I commenced the tour three weeks previously. I have walked easily, only averaging fifteen to twenty miles a day, which is not too little if you would see the country and its people. At the same time one has to keep pegging away even at this mileage, and must exercise a certain determination, otherwise there is a tendency to loiter and become lax and indifferent and "get no forrarder."

I certainly think it well to make a plan of your proposed tour beforehand, and to learn all you can about the country you are visiting. You can then stick to your plans just as much or as little as you find convenient or agreeable, so long as the tour is accomplished in the long run. Of course you must have a good map. Don't spend much time with guide-books; they often omit the grandest sights, and you are not going out to learn the details of public buildings and the dimensions of churches. The greater part of what you are going to see the guide-books know not of—the beautiful country in its natural glory; the people, all sorts and conditions, their habits and customs; the inns and, of course, the catering therein; lastly, and not least, the beautiful abbeys, churches, old-world cities and towns, and anything which is artistic or full of romance of the past.

To see and appreciate all this requires an open mind, full of toleration and devoid of prejudice and preconceived notions either on matters religious or social. Unless these conditions be observed you had better spend your time tramping in your own country; but given these conditions and a cheerful disposition, most people will find no end of interest, instruction, and real pleasure in a walking tour through Normandy.

Dieppe to Geneva

(1903).

I. DIEPPE: ROUEN.

WE have had a rough crossing from Newhaven by the night boat, which lands us at Dieppe at three o'clock this morning, dark, for it is the middle of September. I see the boat-train alongside, which, after the Custom House examination of luggage, starts for Paris. Having only my knapsack to look after, I wait till the usual rush and excitement is over and the boat cleared. The captain approaches me; and on hearing I am on a walking tour from Dieppe, he kindly allows me to remain on the boat till breakfast-time, the steward in the meantime putting me into a state cabin, where I secure four or five hours' rest before breakfast. After breakfast, which consists of eggs and coffee, I start out, and feel very fit as I march away out of the harbour and along the promenade. Few people are out at half-past eight, but a fat motorist who sat in his car regards me with astonishment; the knapsack and puttees evidently puzzle him.

I met a young man last night in the train, a journalist who was going to Paris for a holiday. He seemed quite enthusiastic about walking when I told him my plans, and asked if he might accompany me. How delightful to go hundreds of miles on foot, right through France into Switzerland! What fine articles he would write for his paper, describing his travels and adventures on the road! Yes, he would be delighted if I would let him go with me. But what experience had he of walking distances, and what was his condition? He had youth on his side, being only three-and-twenty; but he is a town man, and had done very little country walking, and that not regularly. However, I persuaded him to go to Paris, and agreed to look him up there a few days later, when, if he was still in the same mind, he might try two or three days' walk from Paris and see how he liked it. I thought it best not to allow his enthusiasm to get the better of him, and so we bid "au revoir" at three o'clock this morning.

But I am off, my tour has begun, and all around Dieppe everything looks delightful. The weather to-day is just as sunny and bright as it was dull and wet when I was here a year ago. And so I march away full of cheerfulness and determination to make my tour a success, for a certain amount of determination and persistence is required in order to make the best of any undertaking, and a

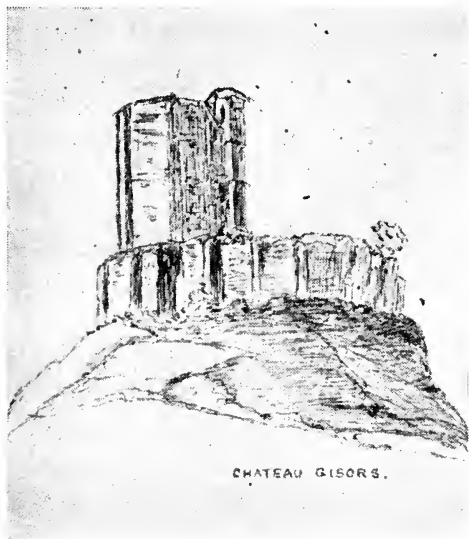
walking tour is no exception to this rule. As I have already said, you must make your plans, and not allow every fleeting whim or fancy suggested by environment to alter or upset them. There need be no hard-and-fast line; but your object must be steadily kept in view, or you may never reach your goal. Above all there must be no hurry, or your tour will be shorn of its greatest charm.

The knapsack weighs fifteen pounds, and includes a Burberry rain coat, so I take a stout stick this time instead of an umbrella, as on my last tour. I wear puttees instead of stockings, the very best possible leg gear, which I shall adopt permanently for walking. Altogether my get-up is rather more sportsmanlike than it was last year, and one tramps more smartly in consequence.

Up a long hill, and I meet a motor car flying down like the wind, and bringing with it a cloud of dust. These machines have evidently come to stay, so we must bring our minds to the fact and quietly make the best of any annoyance they may cause us.

As I tramp along I think of the old days when, on this very road, pilgrims footed it to Rome, and so the spirit of romance is conjured up, with a host of mind-pictures, all tending to lighten your way and to make all around you more interesting.

I feel again that walking with a knapsack is the best way of seeing a country, its people, their ways and doings. It is certainly the most comfortable way. You are free and independent, and can go on or stay, or do as you please every day, and only require to keep well and cheerful in



CHATEAU GISORS.

CHATEAU, GISORS.

order to make your tour a success. Your mind insensibly absorbs the beauties of the country, and this is true life and the best spent time of one's life. You become imbued with a tolerant, sympathetic spirit, and you return home with a broadened mind and pleasant reminiscences, on which you

are able to draw for many a long day, as I have found again and again. You make the acquaintance of people hitherto known to you only through books, and you learn from actual contact their complexity of tastes and habits. The ordinary tourist knows what he is likely to see beforehand, through guides and books, on the well-trodden way; but you find a thousand things of interest on a walking tour which he knows not of, and I have observed they invariably look better and more interesting than was anticipated. Motorists turn and look at me, and we greet each other—the old-world way and the new mode of travelling.

At the village of Sagieville there is an auction sale going on at a cottage, and I watch the cheap things disposed of among the crowd of gossiping peasants, when a military van with a pair of well-bred horses and two young soldiers pass me and offer me a seat. Here is a chance of a chat with soldiers, so up I get and we rattle away merrily as far as Totes, where they stop at an inn, and at my invitation take a glass with me: just a modest “*petit verre*” they have, and they tell me much about their work and the country. They are going to Caudebec to join the garrison, so after a few miles’ lift I leave them and peg away for Rouen.

Riding is not walking, but I am under no obligation to walk every yard of the way. One gets

information and agreeable change in this way; so if one avoids the railways, I think an occasional lift by road is allowable, and invariably forms a pleasant incident.

The road is very good, and would prove excellent for cycling. There are plenty of apples on the wayside; and the day being hot, I find them very refreshing. There are two varieties, red and yellow; the latter are the better. Sportsmen are busy shooting partridges, and their get-up is rather more fantastic than we see at home. I talk to every one I can, and am soon interested in many questions, chiefly the harvest, which they say will suffer from the late heavy rains. In this respect it is the same in England. The cattle are all tied to pegs driven into the ground, and in this way they graze, as I found on my Normandy tour last year. It must be a more economical way of eating the grass, or they would not adopt it. Economy is their great characteristic. From Monneville to Maromme there is some fine wooded country.

After a long day's tramp I get to Rouen at six in the evening and put up at a good hotel, but what proved to be the most expensive one on the whole journey. A very agreeable Belgian sat next to me at dinner, who spoke his French very deliberately, evidently for my benefit. We had a short walk together after dinner, and he told me he was

cycling through Central France and back to Belgium, but he did not seem to be impressed with Rouen, nor with the romance of touring in general. He was quite a matter-of-fact man, with a decidedly utilitarian, commercial mind, which hardly appeals to me; however, we spent an agreeable hour or two together.

Rouen is a glorious old city. Christianity was preached here as early as the third century; also it was an important Roman centre of civilization. It was here in 1431 that the British disgracefully put Joan of Arc to death at the stake, although much blame rests with the Burgundians, who sold the "Maid of Orleans" to the English.

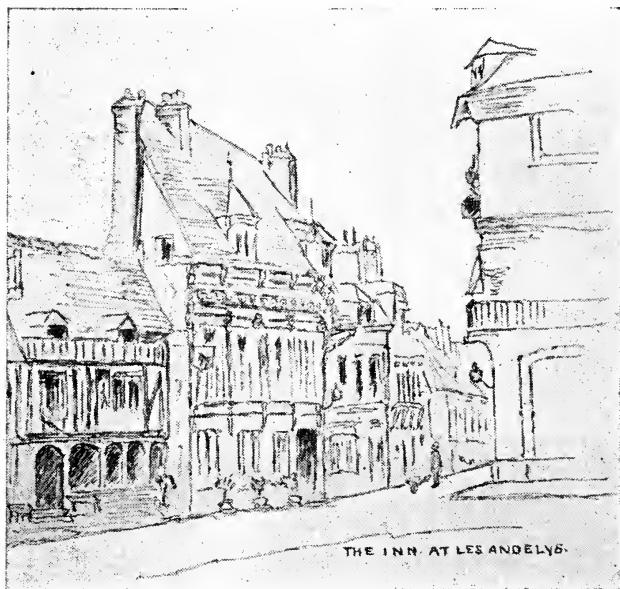
The streets of Rouen still show some rare specimens of old-world architecture, but of late years the city has been considerably modernized and spoiled. Victor Hugo calls it "*la ville aux vieilles rues*." I consider the quaintest bit of all is where stands the old clock tower. This is particularly fine. The chief attraction is the magnificent cathedral, which dates from the thirteenth century. It has three fine portals decorated with reliefs, but which were mutilated by the Protestants in 1562. Among the frescoes Herodias' daughter is represented dancing on her hands and throwing up her legs in the air in a somewhat doubtful manner. The western façade is one mass of ornamental incrustation of sur-

prising beauty. The great central tower was destroyed by lightning, and has been replaced by an iron structure, which I do not consider artistic. It is hard and, of course, metallic, and seems altogether out of proportion. The interior is very grand and of colossal dimensions, and I found the beautiful stained glass a study in itself. In the museum is a charter signed by William the Conqueror, who, being unable to write his own name, has made his cross by way of signature. William died at Rouen, but his remains, as all know, were interred at Caen.

I am up early, and make up the hill for Andelys, where is a fine view of Rouen and the surrounding country; indeed, one of the prettiest and most extensive views I ever saw. You get the beautiful windings of the Seine and the distant country, of woodland and valley as far as the eye can reach. Then at your feet is the grand old city of Rouen and its stately cathedral, with their graceful spires shooting up to the sky, all bathed in the morning sunshine. Apples are growing in profusion all along the roadsides, the ground under the trees being thick with them. To-day they are deliciously cooling, for the sun is hot. Motors rush past me at express train speed, far greater than we see at home.

For lunch to-day I get some cider, bread, and cheese, and they ask me if I have got a knife. All

is very primitive. I found the same thing in Normandy last year. The natives expect you to carry a substantial pocket-knife for cutting your bread and cheese in these little out-of-the-way eating-places, and thus save them as much trouble as possible. But the bread and butter and cheese are



THE INN AT ANDELYS.

invariably good, and each district has its own special cheese, which the people greatly pride themselves upon. Indeed, the variety of cheeses you get in France constitutes one of the many little surprises which await you at lunch time.

At St. Pierre there is a pretty vale scene, and here I noticed factories where lace and cotton goods are made. The roads are of flint, which is found abundantly here, and makes an excellent surface. Woods, nay, forests, are on all sides, and even for the recent wet season the apple crop is surprisingly good. "Ble et avoine sur pied a vendre" ("standing corn for sale") is an announcement you see on the roadside. The farmer evidently prefers to divide the risk of harvesting with a middleman.

II. LES ANDELYS.

The approach to Les Andelys is pretty, with the majestic winding Seine and wooded hills around. I am just now seated on a seat marked "Touring Club de France," from whence the prospect is remarkably fine, wood and water being so beautifully blended. The Touring Club de France is a remarkable club, having a huge membership of scores of thousands—pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, anyone interested in touring. The Club is a rich institution, and has joined the Government in several schemes for the improvement of the roads, the erection of danger boards, finger-posts, resting seats, anything to further the interests of tourists.

But I am tired and hungry, and can see where my inn lies down there in the village, where I shall rest to-night, and where I feel sure of comfortable quarters; so I just swing down the hill as the clock chimes six. There is something pleasing and satisfactory when you can see your resting-place for the night after a hard day's walk. You feel to have earned what you get, and consequently everything is of greater value and tastes better. In short, you are on better terms with yourself and the world generally. I never experience this best of all feelings to so full an extent as I do when walking. It is the continued exercise in the open air, the constant change of scenery, of incidents, of the weather, which induces this feeling of repose and contentment inseparably associated with a walking tour. A comfortable bed and a good dinner of soup, fish, roast veal, cheese, peaches, and good wine are all here this evening, and are all duly appreciated. A young Frenchman and his wife who are staying for the fishing are the sole guests with me, and we are soon on good terms. They seem much interested in looking at my maps, and show more than a casual acquaintance with the country. They tell me I had come the most interesting route from Dieppe, and advise me to take train from Mantes, as the country towards Paris is not interesting.

To reach my bedroom I have to cross a large open courtyard all overhung with trailers and planted with shrubs; pretty, and all of the olden time, in its fine timbered gables, stairs, and banisters. The floors are of polished oak, and everything induces that sleep which infallibly comes to the open-air devotee.

The Chateau Gaillard, founded by Richard Cœur de Lion, is passed next morning, and from whence I get a fine view of the Seine and surrounding country.

La Roche Guyon is another fine castle, the old part at the top of the hill dating back a thousand years. Lower down is the modern chateau, which was once owned by the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, the famous wit and philosopher. Few men had so deep an insight into the human heart as the author of *Les Maximes*. They are excellent and highly instructive, but are necessarily cynical, or shall we say unnecessarily cynical.

The day is glorious and my "bon café au lait" was particularly refreshing this morning, the butter being of an unsurpassable quality. There is a district in France which produces the finest butter, and which commands nearly double the ordinary price in Paris. Surely I am in the district, I think, as I lay it on to the beautifully crisp rolls. And I do lay it on, for there is no stint, and there is nothing better for walking on

than plenty of fresh butter. It keeps one in good form and prevents thirst. And as I march along, the women are knitting and tending the cows at the same time. Time is money, and they waste neither.

This is the district of the vine, and, therefore, the wine country, and the apples and cider are now left behind me. For the benefit of those who love "long" and strange drinks, I may mention that I saw a man mix wine with cider the other day, and he appeared to enjoy the mixture. From its appearance it did not look very inviting.

III. VERNON: PARIS.

Vernon is my next resting-place. At Vernon is a factory where the State manufacture military equipments, otherwise I noticed nothing of special interest, except a handsome bridge across the Seine.

Here are fine boulevards cut into arches, which look pretty and are grateful shade from the hot sun as I stroll into the town.

The farmers make up their hay in bundles, and stack them up in that way; thus they get a ragged looking stack, not at all like the neat and pleasing stacks which the English farmers build.

My sack to-day feels hot to my back, so I improvise an extra strap and sling it at my side for a change. This I found a decided advantage all through the tour. Thus I can carry it three ways—on either side and on my back. These are little matters, but they make all the difference to comfort and enjoyment.

This evening was uneventful; but restful.

There are days which are not full of incident, ordinary days of plodding along. You cannot look for fulness everywhere, neither can you expect sunshine every day, or it would not be appreciated. We take the dull days with the bright ones and are happy. The most we can hope for is that the bright, eventful days shall preponderate, and they generally do; but much rests with ourselves.

From Vernon to St. Germain there is little of particular moment save the famous chateau of Louis XIV. and its beautiful grounds. The forest and surroundings are glorious, but the suburban element makes it more a place for sight-seers than the resting-place for the tourist on foot, so I take train into Paris, and thus avoid tramping over miles of paved streets.

There is not much interest in walking through the suburbs of a big city, as I found a few days later when I strolled out of Paris to Melun, a most uninteresting place.

I meet my young acquaintance, and he is still enthusiastic about walking. He decides to accompany me for a few days to see how it agrees with him, and is ready to start at once. I suggest that we spend a couple of days on foot seeing the sights of Paris. He will then be able to get his walking legs into condition, and after this preliminary canter can commence with greater confidence for the country. This suits, and so we do our six or eight hours a day on foot, taking things easily, with a couple of hours' rest for lunch; but at the end of the second day, instead of getting my friend into condition, it knocked him up completely, and quite crippled him. His feet and legs gave way entirely, so that he was unable to walk at all. The spirit here was willing, but the flesh and bones surprisingly weak! Of course he was pleased not to have started the tour with me, and after a rest he finished his holiday in Paris, writing to me afterwards.

The proprietor of the small hotel at which we stay in Paris seems much interested in my tour, and chats with me some time about it at breakfast. Taking up my boots and weighing them in his hand, and doing the same with my knapsack, he smiles and sighs as if he considered it a penance to carry them. "What should you do if it rained?" he asks. "Should you go on walking?"

"Certainly." And I show him my rainproof coat.

"Ah! *impermeable*," he replies, feeling its texture.

"But what about 'les voleurs' (robbers)?"

"Well, I haven't given them a thought yet."

"But what if you can't find an inn of a night?"

"Well, there is plenty of room outside," I reply.

He shakes his head and exclaims, "Ah! les Anglais, les Anglais, ils sont très pratiquables!"

At a gunsmith's shop in the Rue de Rivoli I find "pieges pour les loups" (wolf traps) hung outside; great heavy things, on the same principle as the spring rat-traps. Wolves are therefore still extant in France, and from the forests I traversed in Normandy I should think they may yet be met with. I am told there is an unbroken line of forest land extending from the Black Forest to Central France, where wolves are still to be found; and I have since heard of them in Brittany.

I never experienced the evil smells of Paris so much as on this visit. Certainly Paris is not nearly so satisfactory as London in this respect. Being out-of-doors so much my sense of smell may be unusually acute. I am glad to get out of "the gay city," more particularly being in my touring costume, which causes people to stare at me, just as they did in London.

All along the route the Touring Club notice-boards show the name of the village, the distance to the next village, or to the next important town, besides dangerous hills and turns in the road, which is a sensible arrangement.

At Montgeron I throw down my knapsack for a good rest, and gladly partake of the cool wine which the goodman brings up from the cellar. Wine never seems to me to be so grateful, cooling, and refreshing as at these welcome "auberges" of France. There are times when we despise the juice of the grape, when we mock at it and deride, for at these times we are well, and fresh, and strong, and have other resources at hand. This hot day I am tired, exhausted by hunger and thirst, and as I sip the good wine and deal with the bread and cheese my heart goes out to the good "aubergiste," who makes a new man of me in no time. While resting I think of the vineyards of France, with which I am coming into close touch, and of the care which is bestowed upon the vine culture on those hill-sides over there. And musing on these things I drop off to sleep for an hour, a refreshing sleep in the heat of the day, which puts me again in better form than ever. And so with a cheery "au revoir" I march out of the little inn and am soon walking through the Forest of Senart, one of the largest in France. I see a dead fox lying near the roadside with his

head nearly blown off. They don't hunt the fox here, so he is shot without hesitancy; every man's hand is against him.

IV. MELUN, FONTAINEBLEAU, MONTEREAU.

At Melun I put up at the Hotel Grand Monarque, which is as good as its title is high-sounding. The inn is full of guests for dinner, including some young soldiers, who are well-behaved merry boys belonging to the humbler classes, and the dinner is extra good. I begin to believe it worth while touring in this district for the sake of the good cheer alone. Besides all this, the rooms are clean and comfortable, and fitted with electric light.

Melun is a considerable old town with narrow streets, and appears to be a garrison town. There is an air of dignity about it, and as I potter about I decide that, like my hotel, it is eminently respectable.

It is surprising how in time one can weigh a place up from observation without getting far wrong in your conclusions. And yet, by experience, you cannot tell how you arrive at your conclusions. Observation and travel, experience, these alone can accomplish it, and when you are alone on a walking tour your powers of noticing are remarkably acute. You can often

form a very fair estimate of a place from its inns or hotels, its people and their general *tournure*.

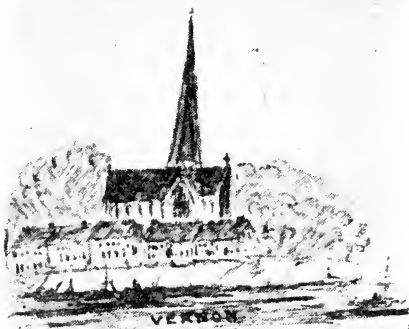
As I leave Melun next morning I pass through the market-place, which is full of fruit and vegetables, and where everybody is busy. Everything looks charming in the sun, particularly the fruit and flowers. I was surprised at the number of gunsmiths' shops here. There is evidently much shooting in and around these big forests, for I am now in the great forest of Fontainebleau, the residence of the kings of France for hundreds of years, and a great hunting centre. Yet I am not concerned with the stately palace and gardens, and all the luxury and magnificence. It is the beautiful forest I admire, with its stately trees and its charming pictures of light and shade. It was from here that the Barbizon school of artists took their name from the village of Barbison.

Morét is a fine old town, but I push on to Montereau for the night, where the river Yonne falls into the Seine. Between the bridges over the Seine and the Yonne is an equestrian statue of Bonaparte.

I have now entered Burgundy, one of the most stirring and romantic departments of old France. It formerly extended to the Mediterranean, embracing Savoy, Switzerland, and the centre of

France. Geneva was once its capital, and so was Lyons at another period. The Burgundians have always been renowned for their hospitality, and in the old times hospitality was enjoined on all people under penalty of certain fines. I am told that the same spirit of hospitality still obtains in the country districts towards strangers, but I found every convenience at the inns, and so I am unable to speak from

personal experience. However, I think I found the best accommodation and the most generous food and wine whilst walking through Burgundy that has



ever fallen to my lot anywhere. Indeed, these recollections of the excellent victualling will always be pleasant reminiscences of my tramps in this part of France.

Here is an old inn with large open door, vast stabling and outbuildings, an ample yard with fowls and ducks everywhere, and huge stacks of wood for the fires. An immense kitchen which serves on occasion for dining as well as for

cooking. The bedrooms are large and carpetless, all floors being polished.

It is situated in the Market-place, near the church and the "mairie," or town hall, and here they find accommodation for man and beast.

All sorts and conditions of men, tourists, sportsmen, pedlars, shepherds, commercial travellers, poachers, beggars, may be seen availing themselves of the warmth and hospitality of the huge "foyer," or fireplace.

It is a motley group you often see of an evening around the blazing fire of these "auberges." There is a sense of companionship withal, a *camaraderie* which could never exist in the formal room of the hotel, where you eye each other with a certain air of indifference often mingled with contempt, and sometimes with suspicion.

Then the culinary operations. A couple of fat capons are turning on the spit. The "pot au feu" contains something simmering, which gives off a savoury odour, all very pleasant and appetising to the hungry traveller. A huge oak table is spread, and the soup is put round, and has no sooner disappeared than we get helped to the capon which "l'aubergiste" has meanwhile been cutting up. A large dish of peas, done up with ham and very tasty, followed by a huge omelette, and of course the cheese as well as the wine of the country. The wine is brought up cool from the cellar and

is delicious. They give you the best of wine here in Burgundy. It is the country of the red grape. And such a banquet I have had for two shillings, wine and all—the price of the eternal cold mutton and pickles in glorious old England. Such instances of cheap living as I see here every day, when compared with the cost of living in England, makes me pause and be less confident of my Free Trade principles than I have been hitherto.

I see huge sides of bacon, hams and tongues, bunches of herbs, strings of onions hanging up, qualifying for coming use, and fitting ornaments for so generous an inn. The landlord's gun, a rat-trap or two, whips, spurs and bits, and game bags are to be seen, and, of course, an image of the Virgin and Child, or a picture of the same. The daughter is a strong-looking, big girl, who smiles now on the guests, and now turns to rate a sporting dog lying in her way as she bustles to and fro. The landlord is busy here and there, inside and out, having a word with this man or a joke with another, or chiding a lazy groom in the yard. Now in the kitchen talking gently to his wife, who is making omelettes; now carrying up wine from the cellar, or cutting a ham, or piling logs on the fire if the weather be cold. He is friend to all, comrade to all who pass or who call and stay at his inn. He knows what is going on in the district, and is a great

man at elections, consulted like an oracle, and what he does not know he invents. His time is not his own, it belongs to the public. There is always a crust of bread for the beggar and a straw bed in the outhouse.

And so I take leave of this hospitable inn, its landlord, landlady, and daughter, all so genial. They bid me "bon voyage," and I am on the road again, wondering what my next lodging may be like, but feeling certain of some little incident or pleasurable surprise.

V. SENS.

My next day's walk is to Sens. I am swinging gaily along about midday, and hearing horses' hoofs clattering along the road behind me, I look round and see two mounted soldiers galloping towards me. They pull up and salute me. Would Monsieur kindly produce his "papiers," his passport? Of course I comply at once, and feel glad I have it with me. You often hear it said that a passport is not necessary in France, but if I had been without mine to-day I might have suffered a great deal of inconvenience. These men may be searching for some outlaw or other, and could have detained me in the absence of my papers. As it was, all went well, and they

withdrew, galloping back as they had come, seeming rather disappointed I think.

The sun is intensely hot, but I am in excellent form and feel no inconvenience from it. I frequently hear a peculiar, hissing noise in the long grass, and am warned of the snakes which abound in this district. I saw a dead one about a yard long lying on the roadside.

It is when you stay to talk to those you meet, to rest frequently by the way, to stop often and look around you, to take all in leisurely, that one acknowledges the value of walking as a means of seeing and appreciating a country and its people.

I walk through a herd of cattle with a fine bull among them and think nothing of it, whereas at home we get out of the way of bulls as a rule. I meet eight or nine young men like Italians, with their cloaks and water-bottles, tramping northward, all full of fun and gaiety. They look back at me, and evidently cannot make me out. I chat with a gamekeeper, who tells me that partridges are very scarce this season. I told him we found it the same in England owing to the heavy rains during nesting, and, indeed, all through the rearing season. Resting by the wayside under the shade all is so peaceful and full of repose that I drop off to sleep, and am awakened by a tramp asking me the distance to Melun.

To-day is hot, and I feel my fifteen-pound

knapsack to be quite heavy enough. I met a soldier at my hotel in London who had walked a great deal all over Europe, and he considered fifteen miles a day a sufficient average if one carries a fifteen-pound sack—that is if you go for pleasure and to see all, making notes and sketches by the way. This was his average, and he found that he got most enjoyment out of his walks under this very moderate rate of travel, and saw more in the long run, besides being able to last out for months. He always took train over uninteresting parts when he could. There was quite sufficient of interest and pleasurable places to be seen without walking through dreary districts. He had never used a bicycle for touring and never would as long as he could walk and carry a knapsack. He had walked in Russia but it was not interesting, and the drawbacks and inconveniences were manifold; the wayside accommodation was generally disgusting. He considered France to be, *par excellence*, the pedestrian's paradise.

“Of course,” he said, “you go alone?” I was struck with the remark and amused, telling him he was the first man who had ever definitely assumed as much. But he wouldn't be paid to have a companion, for he said the chief feature of the tour is gone; its absolute freedom and independence at once degenerate into a picnic. You must make your own plans and carry them out

yourself *à la militaire*, said this soldier with decision. He was a handsome, well-set-up man of sixty, looking little more than forty, well groomed, of course, and with an easy air of gaiety combined with a firmness and decision in his every motion and gesture. I was glad to have met him at the outset of my tramp, for we had so much in common; but when I suggested how well we should have walked together, he smiled and said: "Nothing of the kind; we should bore each other to death before the week end. We should both see more and have altogether a better time by going alone."

I am now walking along the banks of the Yonne. Oxen are working in the fields. Why don't we employ them in England? for I am sure they must be economical, or the French would not employ them. For miles there is a straight road with a double row of trees, and greensward at the sides like a pile carpet. Gamekeepers and others carry their guns slung on their backs; a good plan where great distances have to be walked.

At the inn where I lunch there is a placard headed "*Loi tendant à reprimer l'ivresse publique*," from which I assume that drunkenness is one of the difficulties they have to deal with here, just as in England. Human nature is the same all over. The landlord and I talk for half-an-

hour on this and other topics. He takes me for an American, and says I speak French too well for an Englishman. All very agreeable and flattering. He was very fat, and on shaking hands I asked him to accompany me, at which his great sides shook with laughter!

Sens is reached, and with it a good inn, as usual. A good "auberge" or inn is the domestic hearth of all and sundry, the table of all who are hungry, the bed of all who are tired. At the word of command the best wines, the best eatables are offered to the stranger. Every one is anxious to serve him, and one formality alone is necessary: he must pay his bill at parting.

Here is the daughter, the maid-of-all-work, with her plump red arms and vigorous manner, which can on occasion be gentle enough. Rosy cheeks, fine teeth, and massy head of hair are points which she generally possesses to a degree beyond what we see in our own country. She is active, alert, often witty, and always well-mannered to strangers, and she has an infinitely better knowledge how to cook a meal and keep a house clean than the English girl of her station. She may wear the "sabots," but these wooden shoes do not detract from her agility, and when on Sunday she appears in her light shoes she skips along as if she had wings, all so gay in her finery and brilliantly white cap. We are told

that Joan of Arc was a "fille de l'auberge," or maid of the inn.

This ancient city of Sens dates from Roman times, and the cathedral, which is very beautiful, is of the twelfth century. The west front is



A BURGUNDIAN VINTNER.

richly adorned with statues, but the edifice is so hemmed in with houses that one has difficulty in seeing it to advantage. The palace of the archbishop is a remarkably fine building.

The banks of the Yonne at Sens are very pretty; the graceful bends of the river through an endless variety of trees, beneath lovely, vine-clad hills, with beautiful woodlands here and there, make up many a charming picture such as would delight the eye of an artist.

Every evening finds me in a fresh inn, and every noon I call at some place for my lunch of bread and cheese and wine, and in all this there is interest and change to look forward to daily.

An old lady at dinner this evening had difficulty in walking to the door, which was some distance from where I sat, and as no one held the door open I went round and opened it for her, apparently much to the surprise of those men who sat near and who never moved. They were evidently unaccustomed to such acts of courtesy, which surprised me very much in this polite country. But there are ill-bred people here as elsewhere. No country possesses all the best manners, nor are all Englishmen abrupt and lacking of good behaviour. I have seen refined manners in France, and I have seen the reverse; and the French commercial people are not patterns of good form on the whole. Indeed, you are occasionally inclined to class them with the Germans. So I thought this evening. The old lady was extremely grateful for so small an act of kindness.

This evening my head was so hot with the continued exercise under the broiling sun that I got up and bathed it in cold water, and was then able to sleep.

I am getting near half-way to Geneva and looking forward to the hill country as a change from the uniformly level roads around here. Fortunately the interest is not entirely dependent upon the roads; there are other equally absorbing incidents occurring daily which all go to make up the joy of a long tour afoot.

It is in the morning, after the good dinner of last night and rest, that one feels at one's best. You are then delighted with your progress, and in summer all is so cool and looks at its best. The "café au lait" puts you on good terms with everything and everybody, and you shoulder your knapsack in the best of spirits, feeling ready and wishful to face a long day in the open air, wondering what incident or what adventure will next be yours.

This hostelry at Sens is of considerable size and the stabling is most extensive, quite of the old coaching-days' order. My bill was moderate for such a grand place. For six francs, or four and ninepence, I had for dinner soup, fish done up with eggs, beef and green vegetables, partridge on toast, salad, sweets, peaches, and a bottle of excellent burgundy; add to this a good bed and

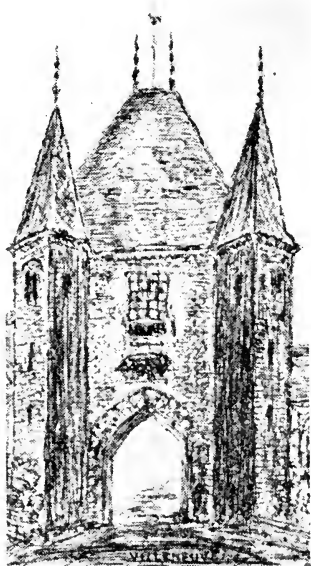
“café au lait” breakfast and good attendance. And where can you fare so well for less than five shillings? Certainly not in the British Isles. And so I march away, well satisfied at my treatment in the fine old cathedral city of Sens.

My way lies through Villeneuve and the big forest of Othe to Joigny, where I rest to-night. I am now walking in the midst of vineyards, and shall be for days. The workers tell me the harvest is not good owing to the wet season. Looking back, the cathedral of Sens stands out finely among the trees. There is now more of the hilly element in the landscape, and it is right welcome. The grapes are hardly ready for gathering; they are of the small red and small round white variety.

All along the way the people are coming in to market in their spring carts, and I catch sight of the P.L.M. express for Calais as it rushes past, and my thoughts fly homewards, although I am not troubled with what the French call “mal-du-pays,” or home-sickness. It is much cooler today, there having been rain during the night.

At Villeueuve-sur-Yonne there is a fine cathedral with shops built in between the buttresses; and their red-tiled roofs, moss-grown, make a pretty picture in the sun. An old woman standing in the doorway of her little shop looks at me wistfully as I make these notes. She is evidently not

accustomed to see tourists with knapsacks. The place is restful, and I enter the cathedral and sit down. All is quiet, not a soul to be seen, and the coolness and repose are very grateful when one has toiled for hours in the sun. The interior is very beautiful, the stone work being particularly white and the nave and aisles very wide. There is some fine stained glass and many pictures of the Virgin. I shoulder my sack and leave this delightfully cool resting-place to look at the picturesque old town, where an artist would be delighted with the two principal streets, formed by houses of most varied outline and colour. There is a gateway at



ENTRANCE GATE, VILLENEUVE.

each end of these, the tall "tourelles" of which, combined with the winding street, where bright green foliage emerges here and there from the grey courts, make a striking picture.

And so I tramp away for Joigny through miles

of chestnuts and vineyards. I wonder who plants all these trees on the roadsides, which give such grateful shade to the traveller. We have no such thoughtful landowners. Surely it must be the State! The country people are gathering walnuts, knocking them off the trees with long sticks.

VI. JOIGNY.

I never saw a river so clear as is the Yonne on entering Joigny, a typical Burgundian town. The setting sun on the broad, placid river and the clear reflection of the sky and the trees, and the white buildings, all so quaint, is a sight not easily forgotten.

I am glad to reach my inn, which is called "le duc de Bourgogne," where I was fairly comfortable, if my surroundings were not too scrupulously clean. But one is not over fastidious, and can wink at a little dust and dirt, providing the bed and food are all right. A certain amount of dirt seems almost inseparable from districts where romance and artistic feeling obtain, as I have found in Spain. The traveller soon accustoms himself to this element, and takes no exception to it; for he invariably finds some form of compensation where it exists, in the excellent food or wine or something of the kind.

As I lean out of my bedroom window and look across the river there is a feeling of gladsome

restfulness which creeps over me in spite of the indifferent accommodation. My dinner has been moderate, but the wine was good; and being tired, I have come up to bed at once, so that I may have a long rest and look at my maps and plans for to-morrow. It is bright moonlight and such a lovely deep purply-black sky as one seldom sees. The old timbered, quaint inn, with its antiquated courtyard, is quite romantic, but I am soon lost in sleep, and awake in the morning by a knocking at my door, when a man-servant brings in some excellent coffee and rolls, evidently a custom, for I did not order anything.

I take a stroll round this old-world town, which lies on the hillsides. Its steep streets leading up to the cathedral are very quaint and picturesque. Everything is old and crusted; there are no innovations, no improvements. There is the same quiet, subdued air about it which I found in Normandy and Brittany towns. Its bridge of seven arches is very fine, and its old church is well worth more time than I spent in looking at it, for the interior is architecturally rich. There were city walls formerly, but only one of the gates now remains. There are several fine old timbered houses, which have a peculiar charm for me. The streets are cleansed by sending water down both sides each morning, and this gives a freshness to them on hot summer days.

Not a word of English have I heard spoken since I left my young enthusiast in Paris.

A troop of cavalry pass through the town this morning, but not of the same well-groomed appearance as ours. Indeed, none of the soldiers are quite up to our standard, and many of them are very awkward, ill-dressed, and dirty in appearance. Conscription cannot be the cause, for in Germany, where military service is most compulsory, the soldiery are well turned out and smart. But, then, Germany is a nation of soldiers; they are drilled into everything, commerce included, from the Kaiser down to the meanest subject.

I wish proprietors would give me more water in my room at the inns, and more substantial towels. A bath is, of course, an unheard-of institution, and yet the people all look healthy and well. I cannot think the middle classes in France can be so indifferent to the virtues of soap and water, and yet from conversations I have had with commercial travellers and others baths are not the invariable household institution in France which they are in England. With the upper and upper-middle classes they are, I take it, just as cleanly in their habits in the one country as in the other, although my "*commis voyageur*" says we are a century in advance of them in every grade of society. He has travelled much in France and

Germany, and has been to London frequently, but he says that in regard to the daily bath he has only observed it to be an institution in England; and not even among the best people of his own country or of Germany, and his business has taken him into some of the best chateaux in France.

As I jaunt along out of Joigny over the great bridge I feel very fit and happy, and reflect upon my old maxim, "Condition will tell, with plenty of bed"; and last night I had ten hours of it.

I am soon passing through immense vineyards, where are fine crops of white grapes. Men, women, and children are working among them in the hot sun. They are not yet ripe, they tell me, not yet "bons a manger."

VII. AUXERRE: AVALLON: AUTUN.

I reach the picturesque and interesting city of Auxerre, from the bridge of which one gets a magnificent view of the cathedral and the abbey. The cathedral dates from the thirteenth century, and is very imposing. I am much impressed by the tall, graceful clerestory with its beautiful stained glass. The old abbey is also very interesting. Both would detain the antiquary at Auxerre for many days; but I have so much to see, so many beautiful places to visit, that it is impossible to do

justice to all the wonderful sights. And although I am wishful to miss as little as possible, it is the people I am primarily anxious to see, and, of course, all the natural beauties of the country I walk through.

The natives hereabout carry big green umbrellas, and no wonder, for the sun is hot. Surely I shall soon reach the ripe grapes, and then the banquet will begin!

After a long day I get to Avallon at dark, and put up at an inn, one of the very best I ever stayed at in all my tramps—the “Chapeau Rouge.” A French commercial traveller sits next to me at dinner, and insists on talking wretchedly broken English, in spite of my own insistence in replying to him repeatedly in French. These people never lose an opportunity of practising anything which will be of service to them, and so this man pegs away, and I have to talk English to him all the evening. Of course, I help him all I can.

The situation of Avallon is very picturesque, and there is an ancient tower in the town which is interesting. I like the tone of the place altogether. It appears to be eminently respectable, and my excellent inn is a good key to the whole place; for all is so scrupulously clean and of the best, and the service is excellent. The man who brings up my hot water is a military man, conse-

quently I am well looked after, and my boots are properly cleaned and my puttees brushed and, for once on the tour, properly rolled up.

Outside my window I see the old Burgundians seated under the trees smoking their pipes and talking over their affairs, while the dames knit and join in the chat and laughter, all so old-fashioned and charming. There is a quiet air of dignity and repose pervading the whole place; and I wonder why so few people come to see these old-world spots, for I see no tourists about. There is evidently much driving done from the hotel, as the stabling is extensive, and horses and conveyances rumble in and out during the evening.

I am told about many curious customs among young people which obtain in Burgundy. A glass is filled to the brim with wine, and the young man sips and hands it to the girl of his choice. If she drains off the wine, he is accepted and she becomes his *fiancée*; if not, she has not given her consent.

At a wedding, all the relatives and friends being assembled, each man has the privilege of untying and tying the garter of the bride, which, of course, causes much amusement to the whole company, according to the awkwardness or dexterity of the several contestants. Later on the whole company attend Mass. The bride and bridegroom being provided with a candle of the same size, the candle which dies out first indicates the one who

will live the shorter life. The company visit the cabaret or "auberge," where healths are drunk, then go back home, where eating and drinking are indulged in and dancing in the granary till morning.

Father Christmas comes down the chimney in Burgundy as he does with us, and puts pretty things in the *sabots* or wooden shoes, which the children leave ready for him. All attend Mass at midnight on Christmas eve, taking "les chandelles de Noel," or Christmas candles, spirally striped in colours, red, green, and yellow. On their return they fall to and eat the pudding and drink the spiced wine. Singers and dancers sing, play, and dance from house to house till the New Year.

Each department has its "patois" or dialect, which, however, is becoming rarer as education advances; just as our own dialects began to disappear with the advent of Board schools.

The Burgundian is generally of open, cheerful countenance, of decided gait, ruddy complexion, possessing much common sense, wit, and cordiality in manner. I think he is above the average French peasant in appearance and general comfort and well-being.

The vegetation is vigorous, and the appearance of the country denotes a degree of prosperity which you do not see in every district of France. The wine of Burgundy is particularly

fine and full flavoured, but is said not to keep for so long a time as the fine wines of the Bordelaise or clarets. The finest districts command enormous prices, and I am told they are bought up years beforehand; and their labels alone are their sole representative in the wine merchants' cellars of London and our large towns. Most wine merchants can supply you with such fine wines as the "Clos de Vougeot" and the "Romany Conti," but these are generally not the genuine produce of those vineyards, or if so, they are of inferior years. The best years' growths of these rare vineyards are unobtainable save at sales of great houses. My informant says:—"Very few of us ever taste the finest vintages of these renowned wines, and when we do we never forget their exquisite flavour and bouquet."

Some of the women's head-dresses are very elaborate, but they are rapidly disappearing, except on rare occasions. There is much lace and gauze, which falls on to the shoulders, with gold or silver embroidery on the cap, which are of different shapes, some rather resembling in outline the bull-fighters' hats of Seville. The men wear the blouse, the woollen cap or bonnet, and long gaiters, reaching above the knee, of leather or cloth. But there is none of the distinction in dress here which one finds among the Breton peasantry.

My military servant at the inn at Avallon carries down my knapsack and goes out with it to the stableyard, returning in a few minutes. He thinks I am riding a bicycle, and says he has never seen a gentleman doing it on foot before, although he has tramped thousands of miles himself, sometimes carrying up to forty pounds weight. When I tell him my route, and that I am crossing the Jura Mountains to Geneva, he becomes quite excited and would like to go with me. Away I go, passing bullocks leading timber from the forests, and mighty big loads they move away with.

I am now walking by way of Saulieu, and the blackberries on the hedges are of a size and quality I never saw before. I cannot understand why they are not gathered, except that grapes and all fruit is plentiful out here; but these blackberries are most luscious.

Entering Autun I pass anglers fishing from the bridge, while the "lavandieres" or washer-women are washing clothes underneath! How they get the clothes so white and clean in cold water is a mystery to me.

A pair of cows in milk are harnessed and drawing a big waggon full of produce, which I think is bad treatment.

I choose the first inn I come to, because the entrance is full of commercial travellers' luggage.

Thus I have always found I get plenty to eat and comfortable, if not elaborate quarters. These men spend all their lives at inns, consequently they must be good judges and well catered for, otherwise their business efforts could not be maintained. They are often well-read, intelligent men, always common-sense fellows, who can tell you something you don't know about their country, its people and their customs.

One of them is interested in walking, and remarks philosophically that he considers the walking man to be richer than he who cannot walk, even though the latter may possess the finest horses and carriages or motors in the world.

I pottered about this old-world town till dark, but all was oppressively quiet, although the place was full of shops.

Autun is one of the oldest cities in France, dating back to the Cæsars, and you see ruins of gates, Roman temples, and antiquities. All these seem to induce that subdued air which haunts me this evening as I glide quietly about. There is a stately Gothic cathedral of the twelfth century, and a fine square in front of it. A large business is done in cattle and horses, besides wood from the neighbouring forests. The famous Talleyrand was Bishop of Autun during the French Revolution.

VIII. COUCHES LE MINES: CHALONS.

I am off this morning for Chalons-sur-Saone. I see some magnificent beeches as I leave Autun; indeed, the whole district is beautifully timbered. They excel us in growing timber. The hills around are covered with wood, and I see a factory chimney here and there, and on inquiry I find they are noted for making carpets, tapestry, and such-like fabrics, besides leather goods.

On leaving the inn this morning my landlord, a rather repulsive-looking, black-browed individual with hair cut short, comes out to see me off and is particularly gracious, shaking hands and wishing me a very cordial "bon voyage." These people are much more in touch with their visitors than are English landlords, and it is all done in a very agreeable manner, which few guests would take exception to.

This morning I have a little excitement in catching a runaway horse and waggon. I heard him galloping along the road, so "off with my sack," and running alongside I catch him nicely any damage is done, much to the delight of the owner.

I now find myself walking up stream for the first time in three hundred miles, real live, running water, the rush of which is the pleasantest sound I have heard since I started the tour. Let me

have the mountains for enjoyable walking. This country reminds me of Perthshire, but it is not so grand. This morning I saw a snake of a greenish-black colour and about a yard long.

After six hours' walking there is no sign of a likely place where I can get refreshment; but this is only an incident of travel. The place turns up eventually, and the wine will be cool and grateful. All comes to him who will but wait—and toil.

“Bonjour, Monsieur!” is the greeting everywhere, and the people welcome you heartily; in a much pleasanter manner, I am afraid, than we welcome the



BURGUNDY PEASANT GIRL.

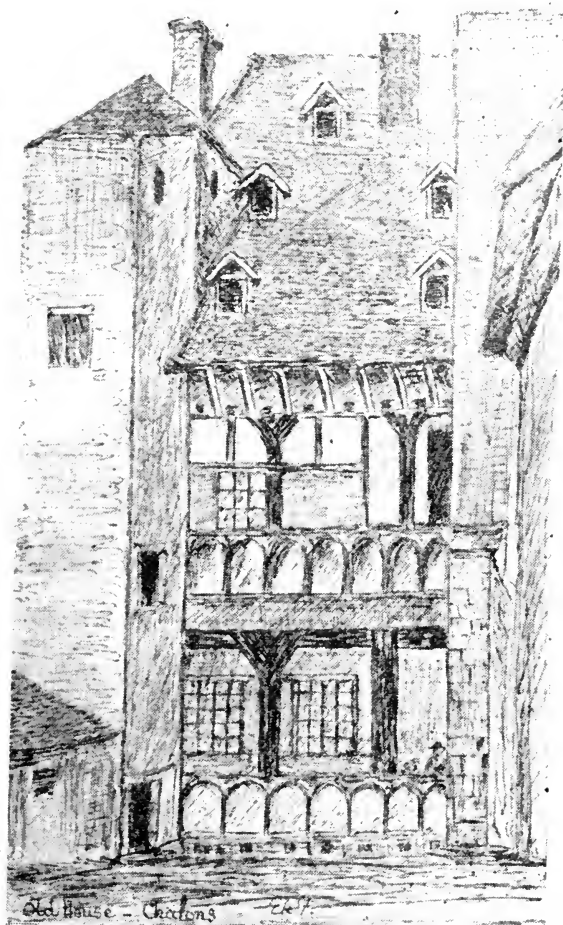
foreigner. If you fall into their ways and customs and make yourself agreeable, talking to them in their own language, you are soon at peace and on good terms with all. They are equally pleased to see you and are ready to tell you all they can; and this is the secret of travel. You must be conciliatory, and enter into the spirit of everything, to the exclusion of prejudice and intolerance.

The atmosphere is brilliantly clear, and the

people are certainly happy. The women are fine specimens; much finer than the men. Both men and women have better teeth, hair, and eyesight, on the whole, than ours. This important feature you cannot help noticing in France to our comparative disadvantage in England. Is it their mode of living, their food, which on the whole is decidedly better cooked and more wholesome than ours? Or is it the wine they drink, in place of which we often drink tea, at least our poorer people do? As I reflect on these things a donkey and cart pass me, carrying home a cask of wine with a little boy seated on the top, looking so ruddy and happy.

Farther on I come to one of the most beautifully arranged vineyards I have yet seen. It is surprising to see a big, well-covered piece of ten acres having a bit at one corner or perhaps in the middle untilled; so capricious is the soil. No wonder there are so many different grades of wine in the same locality.

I reach Couches-les-Mines just as rain begins, and get to the inn dry. This is the poorest place I ever stayed at in France. Dark and dingy, with men drinking in an ill-lighted room, and a ponderous landlady, who stares at me when I asked for a bed. Just now a young woman appears who grasps the situation, and marches me upstairs into a little box of a place called a



OLD HOUSE, CHALONS.

bedroom. I demur, and she gives me a room rather larger, which looks on to the courtyard of the inn, where a quarrel is going on between two rough-looking men. There is a crowd of men and women standing about, and a general babel. The men quarrel as if it means death, but no such exciting incident occurs; and after a little time the row subsides, and they all come inside to settle it over their wine.

The dinner is by no means bad, but very roughly served, every one helping himself out of a huge centre dish or pan. The wine is good, and the stew and omelettes and cheese very acceptable. This soon put us all on amicable terms with each other. I get on well with my next man, who says we in England are on the downward grade. We had had our day of great prosperity, and it was now another country's turn to wallow in wealth, to which I assent, suggesting that France was the one country above all others most likely to come in for the lion's share of future wealth and prosperity. And so we are all unanimous, and pleading fatigue I retire whilst harmony prevails.

There is an open corridor running round the courtyard, full of beds. Here, too, I see a score or more of harvesters, men and women, sleeping in their night clothes in the open; a sight which I shall not easily forget.

One of the women catches me looking out of my window and I withdraw for a few minutes. On looking again she calls out something I cannot understand, and then I hear footsteps coming up the stairs, and some one knocks and tries my door, which is bolted. I think my menacing remarks have the desired effect, for the footsteps disappear, and I get into bed and to sleep. Later on I awake with the barking of big dogs and the noise made by the men and women in the yard, and for the second time I hear footsteps coming quietly to my door, so I light my candle, and hear a hand passing over my door as if feeling for the latch. This time I threaten to shoot clean through the door, and at once my kind visitor takes off and leaves me to sleep in peace.

A knuckle-duster was my only arm, and would have certainly been plied with right good will had circumstances made it absolutely necessary to strike. I should stand a great deal of unpleasantness, however, before actually coming to blows; but the sight of a knuckle-duster in the powerful hand of an active man has before now helped to maintain peace in my own experience. I have a lively recollection of its potency one dark night in Venice.

Next morning I am off betimes in the gay sunshine, passing through an apparent endless

succession of vines, where the men and women are all hard at work. I see scores of wooden troughs by the footpath, full of little black grapes, ready to be taken in waggons to the wine-press.

The view from the top of the hill for miles around is magnificent—one immense stretch of vines, nothing but vines for miles and miles, further than the eye can reach; dotted here and there with little hamlets with their red-brown tiles, looking truly artistic in the sun. It is a sight I shall never forget, and all is so restful. Men carry the grapes on their backs in panniers and empty them into the troughs by the wayside.

I ask if the "recolte," or harvest, is good. "Il n'est pas mauvais" is the invariable reply—"It is not bad." Like farmers, they won't admit that it is good. On asking again a man hands me a couple of bunches of grapes with the bloom on, which are very good, and I eat them as I go along. Indeed I am asked to help myself, and am eating grapes every day, pounds of them, as I ate apples in Normandy. People who talk about claret being made from rubbish ought to come out here and see how plentiful grapes are.

I reach Chalons sur Saone, and not liking the appearance of the old-fashioned inn, I take the advice of a commercial traveller and put up at a new hotel, called the Hotel Moderne, and am delighted with everything. The dinner is unusually

good. White soup, fish, lésagnol veal, petit pois et lard, chicken and salad, apple fritters, grapes, and, as usual, excellent burgundy. One of the best cooked, best served dinners I ever had for two and fourpence halfpenny, or three francs. The place is beautifully furnished and fitted with electric light throughout, thus showing how French folk move with the times when necessary.

I am told that the farmers in this district are generally prosperous—that is if they are peasant owners, but if they are “me-



CHATEAU, BEAUNE.

tayers” they are poverty-stricken. In the latter case the landlord finds the land and the capital to work it—which means the stock, buildings, fixtures, movables; everything except the labour, which the tenant finds. At the end of the year, the harvest, consisting of grain, olives, wine, cattle, etc., is equally divided between landlord and tenant, or a valua-

tion is made, and the tenant pays in money. The latter is now the more usual course. This system of "metayage," as it is called, is dying out, and has never appeared to be advantageous to the tenant. Indeed, no farms are so prosperous as those belonging to the peasant owner, none are so well tilled and dug with such untiring activity, for spade culture is greatly in evidence on these small holdings, and the owner works early and late in making his little farm produce to its utmost capacity.

There are still districts where fowls, butter, etc., are given to the landlords as tribute by the tenants, but this very old custom is fast disappearing. Before the Revolution the peasantry were rendered miserable by such exactions, which they bore, however, with great patience so long as their landlords lived among them; but, when the latter became attracted to the Courts of Paris and Versailles the peasantry naturally demurred, and trouble began. They readily admitted that the peasant is born to plough and reap, and the noble to fight and defend his lands and his people. If he cannot do this, if he absents himself, and prefers the soft effeminate life of Paris to the vigorous life of the country he is useless; and he naturally induces his people to hold him in contempt and hatred.

This has been the cause of all the troubles in

Ireland, and in a lesser degree in England. It is the duty of landowners to stay at home, to live among their tenantry, and to spend their rents at home, and not at Monte Carlo or Paris, or anywhere else. If they on their part do their duty all goes well, and the tenants are satisfied and prosperous; if not, trouble is bound to follow, and sometimes a great social upheaval, which is disastrous to the country at large. Even to-day in these parts the country roads are still kept in repair by the farmers of the district through which the roads run, who find labour, material, and cartage. There are districts where the tenants are equally bound to do the carrying for their landlord, wood from the forest, stone from the quarry, and such like.

It appears that there is a disposition for the young men of the better classes to return to the land and settle down as their grandfathers did; but many of the chateaux of France have been turned into farmhouses, and are likely to remain as such for some time. The law of primogeniture has never obtained in France. Consequently, an estate being divided equally between the members of a family, and again sub-divided for generations, a great number of very small holdings, such as no other country can show, is the result. This sub-division has gone so far, in some instances, as to leave the farms little larger than gardens, and

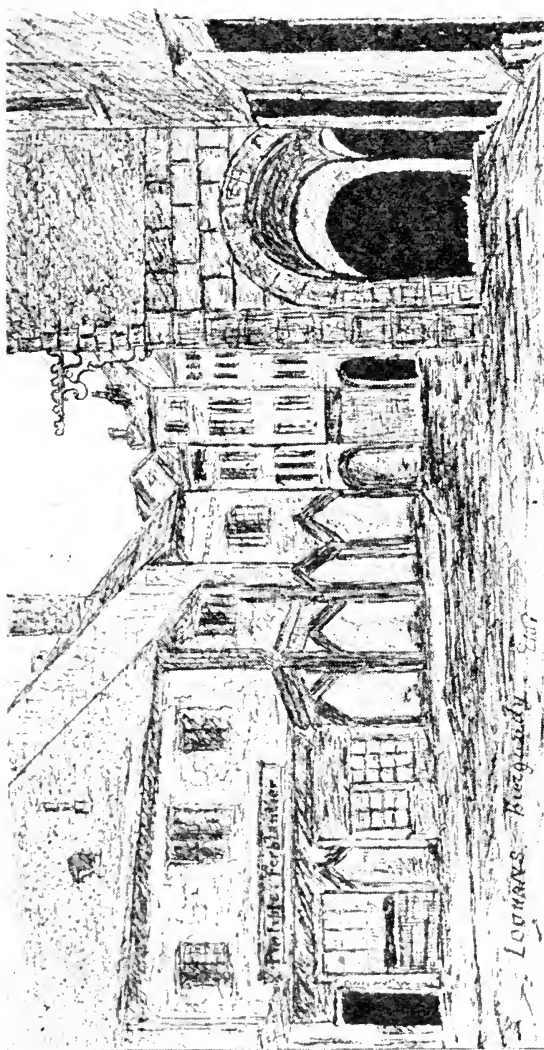
this has led to an intensive culture, which produces crops of unexampled growth and quality.

Education in France, as in England, seems to favour an exodus to the towns. It tends to make the rustic boy contemptuous of the hard work and toil which is inseparable from farm labour. Therefore, children must be taught to love the life of the fields in preference to mere book-learning; to be interested in all that pertains to the land and out-door work, and to look upon town occupations and indoor work as inferior to the work of the land, which, after all, is nobler, more energising, and manlier.

IX. LOUHANS: CLAIRVAUX: ST. LAURENT.

The country about St. Germain-le-Plat, from Chalons, is not interesting, but Louhans is a delightfully quaint old place with its steep roofs. Vines have now given way to meadows and woodlands, and a good deal of maize is grown.

So I push on to Lons le Saunier, to get a sight of the Alps, and this gives me an impetus, for my heart is set upon that sight. I have seen the Alps two or three times, but have gone by train, and there is no pleasure in that. But to walk five hundred miles to see them is quite another thing, and I feel the excitement of it more every day I get nearer my goal.



LOUHANS, BURGUNDY.

At Louhans the dinner was poor, consequently the place lost some of its charm. Dinner is, however, a greater institution to a Frenchman than it is to the average Englishman. Even the ordinary commercial traveller in France scans the menu with gusto. And then the wine!

What a number of well-to-do middle-class people in England make what is called a high tea! High rubbish! Even the poor have their little dinner here, and they are more chatty and agreeable in consequence.

Once more I get among the vines as I leave Louhans, and the country is hilly and more interesting. The cattle on the hillsides are belled, and the tinkling is pretty and reminds me of Switzerland, which I am nearing. As I stand and look down on the pretty hamlet of Revigny, with its red-brown tiles surrounded by vineyards, the purple hills around, the winding road beneath with bullock waggons filled with wine casks rumbling gently down the steep, all on this sunny, peaceful Sunday morning, I feel it to be a picture which I shall never forget. The colours of the landscape are unique, the varied shades of the vine lending a peculiar charm to it. And the sunshine gives to everything those varied tints which make even the merest detail look lovely.

After some cool wine and excellent bread and

cheese I swing away for Lons de Saunier, where I stay the night at an inferior hotel. I am not doing quite so well as usual in this district, but we must take things as they rise and keep pegging away. This is an ordinary, uneventful day, and so I have done a little reading here and there, and feel quite satisfied.

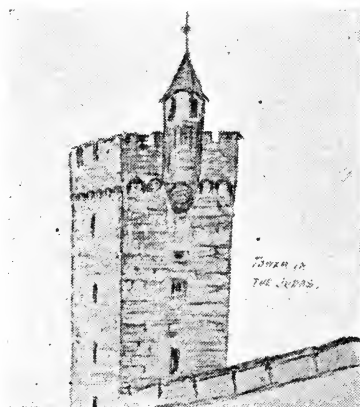
The great secret in walking for enjoyment is to take plenty of time, feed well, and read, if you like, when resting or when tired of looking around. An Italian passes me with his knapsack. He is going north, and seems pleased when I speak to him. And now, as I near Clairvaux, I see the Juras before me, and my heart leaps with joy; for my goal, Geneva, is just beyond, just over those mountains standing so majestically in the sun. I hear a peculiar whistling sound, and on looking round see bundles of hay being shot down a wire cable from the high lands to the low.

I cross the river Ain, and from its greenish-hued, rushing waters one can conjecture the proximity of snow mountains. The view from the bridge is magnificent, the stony river bed showing up the beautiful tint of glacier water, and the distant purple mountains make up a delightful picture. So I sit down and spend half an hour taking in what I shall see in my mind's eye for many years to come when thinking of this tour. There are herds of small cows like those of

Gruyère, and girls are tending them with whips, which they love to crack as I pass by.

Three Savoyard boys march along, one of them playing a march tune on his accordion to enliven them and help them on their way; and I catch a glimpse of Clairvaux, my resting-place to-night—welcome, very welcome. A very quaint village it is. There is an old man singing about the cuckoo, and I listen to him from my bedroom window, and also to the plashing of the fountain in the little square. From the clear, crisp, blue air I feel the high altitude; indeed, I can always tell when I am over a thousand feet. There is a peculiar tone in the atmo-

sphere, an exhilaration which is pleasant up to two thousand feet or so, but which beyond that is rather depressing to me. I remember staying a week or two at Chamounix some years ago for the climbing; but I couldn't sleep, and had to leave my friend and go down to a lower level at Geneva, Interlaken, and such places.



TOWER IN THE JURAS.

There are some excellent French people staying at this inn for the quiet restfulness of the place, and they are most agreeable, telling me a great deal about the high social side of French life. The same struggle for position, the same heartburnings and disappointments in Republican France as in Monarchical Britain. And money is the great lever there as it is with us, and, I should say, it always has been. At any rate there is a substantiality about it; and if accompanied by the smallest element of education and refinement, it is likely to remain predominant. My acquaintances speak a little disparagingly about English customs, but in an easy, gay tone which is not intended to be offensive. They speak not a word of English, nor have they visited England; and when this very important factor is gently borne in upon them, they readily admit their defeat, and we become much more unanimous at the close of the evening. They ask me if one can travel anywhere with French and English; have I not found these two languages sufficient to carry me through any country? I tell them that such is not my experience; but that if you can speak French you can travel anywhere in France or in Switzerland, but not beyond. I slept badly at this inn, my bed being surrounded by heavy hangings, which I tried to pull down, but did not succeed.

The scenery is fine as I descend the valley from

Clairvaux, with the rushing waters on all sides and the sun shining brilliantly upon everything. I am looking out for the fine soldiers of the Swiss Guard, who I am told are to be seen on my route to-day; fine fellows who can walk all day carrying forty pounds; but I don't see them. Then rain has fortunately fallen in the night again and made everything fresh and lovely.



SWISS TOWER, JURAS.

These mountain roads twist in every direction, in order to get round the various steeps they have to contend with. First you turn east, then west, and now you are facing north, but all the time you are making south-east. I can hear the echoes from the adjoining valleys of the herdsmen calling to their cattle. Bullocks are chiefly used here for heavy loads.

They are yoked together and push the cart along with their heads.

And now the country opens out another aspect. The surrounding hills are covered with pines, and the "corniche" road is blasted out of the rock, all looking very wild and romantic. I am walking in a ravine, with greenery all around, and as high as the eye can reach it is one mass of pine-trees. What is more, it is delightfully cool, for the sun cannot penetrate down here.

I reach my inn at St. Laurent whilst the tinkle of bells from the surrounding cattle comes out from the hills. All these inns have the electric light, in consequence of the cheap power from the waterfalls on all sides. I am now three thousand feet above sea level, and feel the somewhat too exhilarating effects of so high an altitude.

There was a motley crew of young men at dinner, who seemed disposed to laugh and jest a little at my expense; but, of course, I took it all in good part, and struck a light for a smoker to light his cigarette by, and he in his turn politely held the door open for me, and we became good friends.

This evening is moonlight, and the air is crisp and still, with that peculiar flavour about it which is peculiar to high altitudes. Looking out of my bedroom window, there is a noisy, drunken fellow outside, making the night hideous with his yells. I expostulate, and he moves away, cursing all Italians, Americans, and English. You hear people say they never see a drunken man on all their Continental travels. They evidently travel by Mr. Cook's personally-conducted agency, or they would see that drunkenness exists here as elsewhere, though not to the same extent as in England.

X. LES ROUSSES: COL DE LA FAUCILLE.

And so I am off again among magnificent pine scenery. All along the road, at intervals of a few miles, are rest-houses or huts for travellers who are overtaken by storm or night. They are massively built stone huts, with stone benches and a fireplace in, very rude and yet extremely useful.

Morez is exceedingly pretty, but the heat is so intense that I can hardly bear to write, so I walk away to Les Rousses, where I lunch, and a big lunch too, for it is all ready, with some motorists hard at it. I am very hungry, and the cutlets and omelettes are most acceptable, and the red wine equally so.

Off I go, and at 2.20 I pass the frontier and am now in Switzerland. The first thing under notice is a girl on the roadside grooming a cow, and right well she sets about it. The district is pastoral, all very quiet and lovely. All the cattle are belled, and the tinkling is quite cheering, the tone from the flat bells resembling the rippling of water in a quick-running brook—that is, when they are heard at a distance.

Passing the frontier I observe some fine big dogs of the mastiff type, but of rather repulsive appearance, so I avoid them.

I am now at an altitude of four thousand feet, with the sun scorching my face and shoulders as I tramp along; but I have decided that I will reach the Col de la Faucille to-night and my goal to-morrow, so up I go, higher and higher, as the sun begins to show signs of setting. I rest frequently by the wayside, thinking I am dead beaten every



MY INN—COL DE LA FAUCILLE, JURAS (ALTITUDE 4116 FEET).

time, for the high altitude is telling against me. I get into one of these rest-huts and eat a piece of chocolate which was left in my knapsack, and this pulls me together for another mile or two. Again I turn into another of these welcome huts. The sun has sunk, it is icy cold, the sky is inky blue, but clear as crystal, and the stars glint like

diamonds. Happy, deliriously happy, as I roll myself up in my coat for a good rest. A gentle feeling of repose and sleep is gradually rising up and creeping over me as I look out from my snug corner at the serene picture of unexampled beauty outside. Millions of pines, with their sharp needle-like tops, look weirdly grand against the sky for miles down the valley. I never remember to have seen the elements present so weird an appearance in fine weather, and yet all is clear, dazzling in its purply darkness, with not a breath of air to stir a leaf. Everything is hushed as the grave; it is freezing. It is intoxicating. It brings on sleep in spite of all resistance. And so, for a few moments, I pass through a dream of forests, rivers, mountains, in endless succession; and on, further on I tramp in my dream, till I am nipped by a sudden gust of snow wind, and awake to find this lovely scene before me in all its weird splendour and reality, only colder and darker. Another effort and I sally forth again, toiling on, and feeling tired and sleepy, and quite resigned to stay at the next rest hut. A pull at the little drop of cognac in my flask gives me a lift, but the rest hut does not appear, although it has been due for some time and has certainly not been passed. I will toil no longer. That rocky cave will do for shelter to-night, when suddenly a sound in front proclaims a living soul, and I

hurry on feverishly round the bend of the mountain road, and there, right in front of me, are the lights of my inn, "La Faucille."

Right welcome it is, I say to myself as I write this in its hospitable parlour. While they are getting my dinner ready a decanter of brandy and seltzer water is placed before me as a reviver, also a "hors d'œuvre" of sausage, bread, etc., all very acceptable to one famished. Then I see my cosy little bedroom, which certainly looks more inviting than the dull, cold cave I thought of spending the night in, for I am now 5000 feet up. They give me an excellent dinner, well served by the daughter of the house, a light-haired, cheery girl of the Norse type. Thinking I have come from Geneva to see the sunrise, a regular thing for tourists to do, she tells me the "garçon" will call me at half-past three in the morning. This suits me well, and I assent with pleasure; but she stares incredulously when I tell her of my walk all the way from Dieppe, and quickly flies off to inform the rest of the house, who drop in to have a look at me, the landlord showing his appreciation in very pleasant terms. The excellent little dinner, with Vin du Cote, a hard, white wine, is dealt with, and after some pleasant talk bed closes a hard day.

I find that the scale of my map, or of the last section, was smaller than the former sections, and

so I got some ten miles or more out of my reckoning; hence the delay in getting here to-night.

My room is beautifully neat and clean, and all is so brilliant in the moonlight as I look out on the pines, which reach down close to me. I can just hear the wind sighing through them as I fall off to sleep.

"Trois heures demi, Monsieur!" arouses me, and I am up, and soon drinking some excellent coffee, after which we sally out. My guide is a dwarf, without cap or coat; a little ferret-eyed chap, who walks away quickly up through the pines in the blue frosty moonlight—a weird, uncanny sight, as he pegs away silently in front of me, save when spoken to. On, on; there seems no end to this forest of pines as we thread our way silently upward. What height shall we be now? Over six thousand feet, he replies, speaking in metres, of course.

After an hour's toil there bursts upon me the sight of my life, for here lies at my feet, as it were, the whole Lake of Geneva, my "Ultima Thule," the town with its lights twinkling in the great distance, and the magnificent mountain chain with the majestic Mont Blanc towering above all. Dwarf hands me his field-glasses, and I can discern the snow. The horizon is just tinted with blood-red, and as we wait in the cold

air, with the brilliant moon full behind us, this magnificent sight in front gradually develops more light and colour, as the sun, little by little, pushes away the curtain of night. A quarter of an hour later and there comes a further development of light, and the lake is like one extensive mass of beaten silver.

We can now see each other's features clearly. The cold air nips me, but the dwarf stands there immovable, hatless and without coat, in his cotton shirt. He is used to it he tells me in a heavy whisper. We hear the sounds of hounds in the distance hunting the chevreuil.

Now, after half-an-hour's waiting, at five o'clock the lake becomes golden, and Dwarf says, "Voilà!" for it is a wonderful transformation, and we stand silent in amazement.

"L'étoile Bergue," he whispers, pointing to the star which has been our guide up through the pines so bright, but it pales in presence of this mighty light now so near bursting upon us.

My hands are numbed, and I can hardly hold the pencil, but I want to write all this on the spot, or I shall never be able to tell of this greatest sight of my life. I can never write it afterwards.

Grandeur, unexampled magnificence of any earthly sight. It is worth every effort of the past three weeks to see all this glorious majesty

of the heavens, and I thank the Powers for my good fortune.

At half-past five the Dwarf hands me the glasses again, and says, "*Voyez, beaucoup de bateaux!*" There, on the lake of gold, I clearly discern scores of fishing boats, little black specks on the shimmering surface.

And now, from the middle of that grand Mont Blanc chain, the light becomes stronger every moment, and I expect a burst of full sunlight immediately. Another sweep of the glasses and all along the chain the snow can be seen crisp and brilliant. Dwarf stands with hands in his pockets and his teeth chattering audibly, for the cold wind touches him at last, as he whispers about my good fortune in having such an unusually good sight, one of the best he has seen for years.

A big light now possesses everything before us, and right away up the vault of heaven is a strange, pinky halo, shading down to yellow tones on the mountain tops, all most sharply defined.

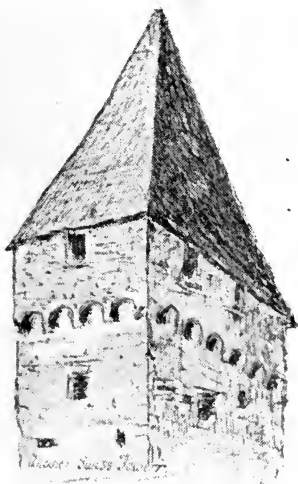
Now, all the country at foot, and lying between us and Geneva lake, is becoming clearly outlined—all the fine tints of green and olive, the fields and vineyards mapped out with their *châlets*, together with smaller hills protruding through the dissolving mist like islands dotted here and there on a misty lake. Pine forests, vineyards,

meadows. The moon is still shining behind us, but its brilliancy is enveloped in indistinctness.

Mont Blanc is now "très joli," and although twenty-seven miles away, "vol d'oiseau," it looks within rifle shot, and you imagine you could see people on it.

"There are people up there just now," says my friend, the Dwarf, and suddenly the sun breaks forth in all its glory, creating such a sight as I never can forget, and as few ever see.

Dwarf looks at me in silence, but not a word is uttered. We both look on again at this unparalleled magnificence, and then creep down in silence through the pines to the inn.



SWISS TOWER, NEAR GENEVA.

XI. GENEVA.

I am off at eight o'clock, down among the pines. It is my last day's tramp, and I feel in

better form than when I started, as I swing away down these mountain paths. Occasionally I get



A BIT OF OLD GENEVA.

a peep at the snow-capped Alps, and my heart leaps with gladness at having successfully accom-

plished all this on foot, and being now in sight of my goal.

The glint of a glacier with the sun upon it arrests my attention as I drop down these steep mountain paths. I have seen a similar sight before, but not under the same conditions; for this time five hundred miles have been patiently walked to see these Alps, but I am amply repaid by their enhanced beauty and magnificence.

In a few minutes a sight of the whole world seems to burst upon me as this immense prospect opens up in illimitable extent—the great lake of Geneva, with the whole Mont Blanc chain beyond and the lovely extensive valley in the foreground, all so clear and boundless, that I am held spell-bound by this mighty expanse of country, so majestic, so enchanting. Indeed, I cannot imagine a finer sight in the whole world, or one which could be seen under such favourable conditions. And so I sit for an hour, feeling the while that it seems too grand to be real.

Down again. It is one long descent by these little paths. Again I catch sight of Mont Blanc, silent and fearful in its majesty, and the big placid lake like a huge curving mass of molten silver.

And as I march down to Gex, my task being finished and my goal in sight, a feeling of

happiness and contentment steals over me, mingled with pardonable pride, such as one only experiences on journeys like this. It is the reward of toil and determination spent out of doors in all weathers, under all conditions, and in spite of all drawbacks and difficulties. Indeed, the keynote is determination, without which one can never carry out walking to a successful end. The innumerable obstacles and hindrances which arise and which are apt to hamper must be quietly put aside, and only the goal steadfastly borne in mind. There must be no hurry. Take time and plenty of rest.

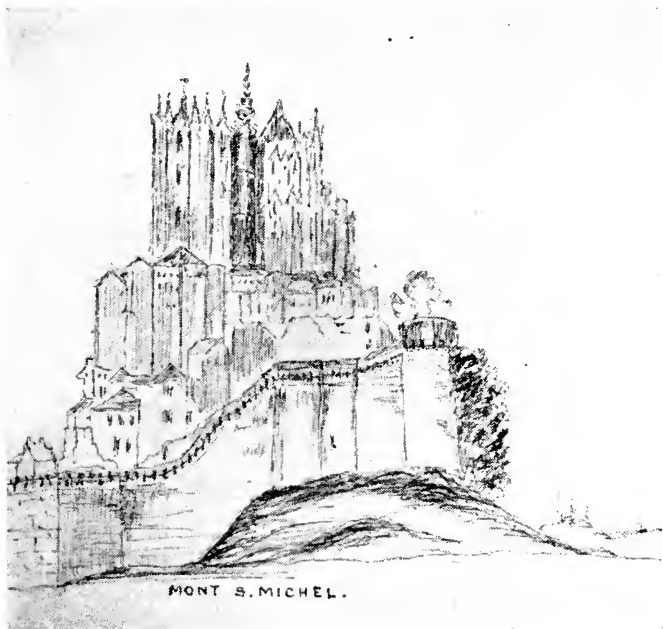
Still I descend, and look up now and then at the innumerable pines with their millions of cones showing sharply against the entrancing blue sky, and in fancy picture groups of them like castles or strongholds of mighty warriors of the past; and from the low ground comes the faint tinkle of cattle bells, or the tenting horn of the peasant.

Down, down through Gex, and then through Ferney, where the great Voltaire sent out his wonderful philosophy—which was not, however, founded upon a rock—and I am in the beautiful city of Geneva.

Through Brittany in 1906.

I. DINAN TO TREGUIER.

I ADJUDGE Dinan one of the prettiest places I ever came across in my tramps. You get beautiful



MONT ST. MICHEL.

woodland and water, together with quaint old streets and buildings. An artist friend came here

to get new ideas and new subject matter. He came for three months. He has been here three years, and has not exhausted the beauties of Dinan and district.

The river Rance is extremely pretty, especially between Dinan and St. Malo, as everyone knows. I consider this scenery quite unsurpassed anywhere in France. But the quaint old houses and shops are so unique. One could spend weeks here sketching little bits of old Dinan, which present themselves at every turn. Here, too, all is so restful and quiet. Even the street cries of hawkers are weirdly musical. I hear them as I wander along by the great old castle overlooking the valley.

Dinan has instituted a *fête*, which may become annual. They call it "The Pardon of the Ble Noir." The "ble noir" is the buckwheat so largely grown in Brittany. The Queen of the Ble Noir from Finisterre came over with her maids in waiting, and great were the doings on Saturday. At dusk there was a grand procession, in which were carried coloured lamps suspended to bushes or young trees, and all marched through the quaint old streets to the music of the biniou, or native bagpipe. The whole presented a singularly unique and pretty sight, for they were dressed in the costume of their respective departments, some of them being particularly fine and brilliant; lace and

colours blended together in attractive style. The "Queen" had a pretty dress with much embroidery, white high cap, and was herself very handsome. The jackets of the men were chiefly of black velvet, embroidered, many buttoned; and their hats were of the broad-brimmed kind, broader than those worn by Quakers.

Later in the evening a concert was given, at which Breton songs were sung, under the direction of Boterel, the famous Breton bard, who



THE QUEEN OF THE FÊTE.

indeed was the promoter of the whole performance, which is a revival so far as Dinan is concerned. The whole *fête* was a grand success, and presented a most unusual spectacle.

In the cathedral I noticed a piece of Breton sculpture in granite, shown on page 169. Satan

is supposed to be made to carry the Holy Water on his shoulders for ever. His expression is one of disgust and suffering.

The quaint old houses and shops with their open windows which reach nearly to the ground and which, being thrown back, show the whole interior, give the appearance of having no windows at all, as in Southern Spain and Morocco. Here you see washing and ironing, cobbling, wood-carving, etc. All the people are most friendly and ready to tell you anything they can. The weather is extremely hot—the greatest hindrance a pedestrian can have. The folks never remember such a dry summer here.

The atmosphere of Dinan is brilliantly clear. The folks tell me they can see to dress throughout the winter at seven o'clock in the morning without artificial light.

I am walking westward from Dinan. The country is pretty all along to St. Brieuc, a charming place near the sea. A big, old-fashioned, interesting Breton town, full of good hotels and very cheap. So accessible to English people; so completely different from anything English, and as I have said, remarkably cheap and good. A first-class hotel charged me for my excellent room, a really good dinner of six courses, café breakfast, seven francs, or 5s. 6d., wine and "eau de seltz" included.

I notice a butcher's shop built into the cathedral—indeed, several shops, all built in between the buttresses. Here are butchers, clothiers, cafés, all amalgamated with the minster. There was much bustle in the town at a very early hour. Marketing at full swing by six. The children are allowed to leave school when they can read and write and cast up figures. They have no advanced—higher grade education here. They get to work early and leave the higher education to those who have a leaning that way—they can go on further. And this not by compulsion.

Wherever one puts up at in France there is good food and a good bed, and in Brittany the charges are often ridiculously low. The hotel keepers are most agreeable and pleased to see you. They

do not affect fine airs, like one often meets with in England. The peasant women wear the native cap of white linen, which is quite becoming. Its shape varies with the department or district. Without the cap they often look very commonplace.

Brittany is called the land of granite and oak.



PICTURESQUE HEAD-DRESS.

You see both everywhere. Not giant oaks, as with us, but small in girth, and often trimmed of their lower limbs. By judicious trimming they get more growth from their timber than we do. Wood is their fuel, and therefore every bit of the tree is consumed. Yes, oak is to be seen everywhere. I saw a grindstone in a farmyard. Everything was of oak. The supports, the handle, the trough, all rough hewn, all oak except the stone itself.

Begging is rare. Notices are posted at the entrances to towns forbidding it.

They have not become used to people touring on foot, and ask me where is my bicycle. My knapsack, which weighs 15 lbs., and my whipcord suit, puttees, and shooting boots are often commented upon with evident admiration. As I am making occasional sketches on this tour, my average mileage will only be sixteen or eighteen a day, and under a broiling sun that is sufficient. Such hot weather is quite exceptional in Brittany.

The old houses on the wayside and in the towns are roofed with a black slate, which is often moss-grown and very picturesque, beautiful golden colours and greens. I was surprised on finding how substantially the inn at Guingamp is built. There is much groined stonework in the passage, and the handrail, staircases, and

woodwork are of rough cut oak, black with age. It might have been built for a prison or castle, so stout and strong is the workmanship.

There is a great deal of waste, rough land covered with gorse, but what land is cultivated is made to grow excellent crops of buckwheat or "ble noir," onions, potatoes, turnips, carrots, and green vegetables of all kinds. Apples are fine and plentiful, cider being the native drink. I bought a pennyworth on the way from St. Brieuc of a peasant woman who was gathering apples. She selected me eight fine ones, and seemed surprised that I was satisfied.

Already I have met two men tramping with knapsacks. One at Dinan, a barrister, who has just finished a walk through Normandy, which he has enjoyed immensely. He prefers walking, and had never been on a bicycle. He would have liked to accompany me through Brittany had time permitted. He walks alone usually, considering that in this way you are able to do as you like, and your thoughts are free. You can get converse sufficiently at the inn and on the way. With a friend, he said, you lose much observation and much talk with the people, whose manners and customs you have come to study. You have not come to talk English and to dwell on English ideas. I quite agreed with him. The other was a French schoolmaster from Paris. He had

instituted a walking club for his pupils, which was a great success. They tramped all over France and Switzerland during holidays. He was quite enthusiastic about it. A real good chap was the young Frenchman, and full of jolly humour, as, indeed, was the Englishman. *L'entente cordiale* is everywhere in evidence. The natives are civil and kind wherever I go. There is no occasion to announce in an undertone where you come from, as I have seen done when tramping in France six years ago.

The French are not born sportsmen. They are becoming more so, however, and it is interesting to see how they imitate us in dress, etc., in all the sporting pictures. I noticed in an illustrated paper called *Le Sport* there had been a big shoot at a chateau in this Dinan district. The bag was laid out in rows. Wild boar, stag, hares, and just a dozen fine foxes. How strange to the eyes of a Yorkshireman!

As I walk along I find the soil is very good in most parts, but not of great depth, and mostly on rock. It is excellently well tilled, and made to produce all that it is capable of producing. One sees it at a disadvantage, for there has been no rain since May, and now it is September. Nevertheless, there are some fair crops. Never did I see more work going on hereabouts. The women work as hard in tilling as the men, indeed they

bear the appearance of overwork wherever you go. The Breton takes life seriously. He is not morose, but merely in earnest. So different from the people of other parts of France.



UN BRETON.

II. TREGUIER TO MORLAIX.

Now I hear the true Breton language spoken by the peasantry, for I am in the Pays du Treguier. The French Government has tried to make French compulsory, but has failed, except in the

eastern portion of Brittany. The Breton language, for it is not a dialect, resembles Welsh.

I observe they are now beginning to cut the "ble noir," or buckwheat. It is not as plentiful

as usual owing to the drought. So a Breton farmer tells me, quite cheerfully. Here, again, the farmers don't build their haystacks as substantially and neatly as we do. They merely pile up the hay round a pole or tall tree, and thus get an irregular cone-like stack. The land is in small holdings, and mostly owned



UNE BRETONNE, NEAR TREGUIER.

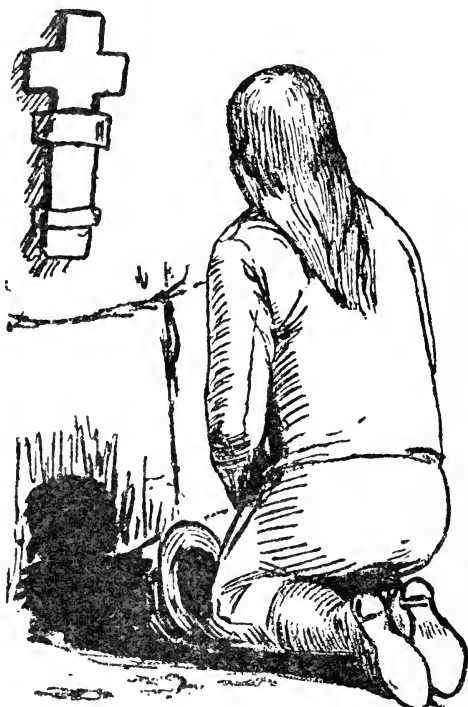
by the peasantry themselves. There are still landowners living in the old chateaux here and there, but many of them are poor, and occupy only a corner of the castle, often the keep or donjon. They are quite a proud people, who attach much importance to their old nobility.

I call at a little "auberge" for lunch, and get some excellent cheese, bread and cider. The place is furnished with rough hewn oak, black with age, and a big foyer, or cozy corner, with charcoal fire; and, of course, the "lit clos" or cupboard-like bed, quite Breton.

"What good boots," one often hears. Yes; we can beat them in leather. You never see a fine pair of hand-made shooting boots hereabouts. What you do see are either tawdry or clumsy.

The Bretons are intensely religious; men and women alike. You see crowds of people worshipping in the cathedrals, and kneeling before their favourite saints. The cathedrals are better furnished than ours, in consequence of the great number of pictures and statues of saints, etc. But those of Guingamp and Treguier are very dark, so that one can hardly see all their treasures. The latter is the finest cathedral in Brittany, but outside one sees ferns growing out of the stone-work at all points, and many evidences of decay. The open work of the spire is very graceful and quite unique. Shops, cafés, etc., are built into the cathedral at one corner. Cripples are to be seen begging. The women dress in black, with white *coiffe*. They attend the funerals of their neighbours for miles around, and this, it is said, accounts for the prevalence of black dress. There is a society for teaching

butter and cheese-making, and right good produce they make. Folks tell me Brittany is the best cultivated province in France, and maintains the largest population for its area; besides exporting



BY THE WAYSIDE.

a great quantity of provisions and general produce. The Bretons aim at making the best of every bit of land, and they are extremely frugal. Horse breeding is carried on, but they breed

an inferior lot of animals, which are bought at the fairs chiefly by the Norman dealers for Paris. From Treguier I get off the beaten track in order to see the lovely coast scenery. I speed along at early morning after having my "café au lait," which the good, stout old landlady at Treguier gave me. She asked if I had slept well, shook hands, and wished me "bon voyage." A jolly old soul with handsome red face, like a russet apple, under her big white cap.

This wild, romantic coast is full of weird tradition. Rocks everywhere, grim and threatening, with the rough sea lashing them furiously with deafening roar. It is a grand sight. There is a cool breeze sweeping across and breathing life. A score of little rocky islets, dotted far away, grimly peep out of the emerald water, all in fantastically weird shapes.

The priest coming out of the little church at the top of the hill puts me on my way. He is a handsome, good-natured fellow, full of good humour, but he doesn't walk far. My pace is too much for him. So after admiring my puttees he laughs heartily, wishes me good morning, and descends the hill. At the hotel at Treguier last night a landowner told me that £2 an acre and upwards was the rent of a good deal of the land in that district. He said they exported great quantities of early potatoes and green vegetables

to England in the spring. He grew beetroot, potatoes, wheat, and vegetables of all kinds, and did well. Profits were not very great, but all made a living. The shooting—partridges, hares, rabbits—is strictly preserved for the owners. Fishing is in great measure free, and there is good trouting in the small rivers.

The cattle are not a first-rate lot hereabouts, and do not seem well fed. The pigs are poor, thin, lanky things, and the sheep are of an inferior kind—worse than in poorest English districts.

Treguier possesses fine oyster beds of good quality, and at the inns you are given oysters freely for lunch and dinner. I noticed some pools near Tregastel, containing crabs and lobsters, which were taken out as required.

There is an absence of hustle in Brittany. Everyone takes life easily, and although there is not that gaiety which one sees in the South of France, the people are cheerful and happy. There are plenty of professional beggars near the churches, old men who ask for a *petit sou*—only a half-penny. The innkeepers prefer the English guest to others, but they say he wants such a lot of water! The sanitary arrangements everywhere are most unsatisfactory. Indeed, there are none. They have no drainage system, which, after all, is perhaps better than having an imperfect one. All along the roads

is fixed a cross or Calvary at the junction of by-ways, generally of rude workmanship in granite, and often of great age. In passing such all reverently raise their hats. The fields are divided, like those in Ireland, with mud and stone banks, sometimes with gorse growing on the top. You get wild boar hunting in Finisterre, I am told; but, I shall hear more about that when I get there.

Near Tregastel is the most magnificent view of sea and country I ever looked at. Villages dotted here and there as far as the eye can reach, right away in this brilliantly clear air. The country is laid out like a map in little plots, with farms sitting snugly here and there in their enclosure, all having the appearance of great fertility. It is, truly, a grand sight and well worth a long tramp to see. I make no attempt to sketch here. It would require Turner himself to do that. Red granite is seen everywhere. Farmsteads, buildings, and walls of it, built of great blocks to last for all time.

Walking to Lannion, a man unkennels a pack of otter hounds just as I pass. They all bound towards me, and I certainly grip my heavy stick in anticipation of trouble; but they are quite friendly. *L'entente cordiale* again, I thought, as I bow to the owner and march on.

It is said you can travel anywhere with

English. Certainly you may in large cities, where you find English waiters at the hotels. But you do not see the people of the country, their peculiarities and methods at such places. To do so you must get away into the country, and here it is necessary to know what they say to you, or you lose, to my mind, much of the pleasure of travel, which, after all, does not consist of sight-seeing alone.

The labourers hereabouts are threshing with flails in the old-fashioned way. The main roads are all well marked, but I am walking away from them just now. You have little difficulty in finding your way after you get out of a town, and the people readily show you the roads.

Lannion is a fine, quaint old town, with a remarkably old church full of grim remains.

Fine crops of clover are often seen hereabouts, and the apple-trees are heavily laden. As I leave quaint old Lannion I meet my landlord in the market making purchases, and he tells me all about the country to Morlaix. I am sorry to leave Lannion, but one cannot stay at every picturesque old place, or Christmas would be upon me before I had got round Brittany. The rain last night has made the air delightfully cool, so, with my friendly knapsack, I set away in fine spirits. Grapes do not do well here. You only see a vine here and there against the house sides, and the

fruit is poor. If we are to believe Ruskin, those countries where the grape flourishes are the countries of romance and art. But Ruskin was not always right in his conclusions.

Two fat priests, in long-hooded cassocks rolled up to allow them freedom, come slowly up the hill, trundling their bicycles and perspiring greatly. We have a word and a hearty laugh. These two jolly rubicunds were surprised at my walking with sack on back.

There is a big horse fair at St. Michel-le-Greve. Of course I stop



BRETON GLEANER.

and look round. The horses are a poor lot, soft, heavy, undersized cart horses mostly. For the best of them, a four-year-old, they asked 750 francs, or £30. The harness lots are poor. Cattle, sheep, and pigs are also for sale. The cattle were of better quality than I have yet seen hereabouts. The whole scene is pretty, the situation by the sea being charming, and far along the winding Corniche road are streams of people, horses, carts, and cattle wending their way to the fair. The deep blue sea, brilliant sky, and long stretch of sands form a pretty picture.

III.

The main thing in walking is not to hurry, or your powers of observation will be curtailed. On my way to Morlaix I meet a fine young fellow at lunch who was returning to his chateau. He is a sportsman, and examines my map with interest. He points out his estate to me on my map, and tells me he has wild boar hunting, which affords real good sport. He was once in Leicestershire, but he smiles and assures me they hunted to ride—*pour le galop*—not for the true sport of hunting. I tell him to come up to Yorkshire next time. Truly a handsome, genial, well-set-up young man. He is driving a pair of horses, and his man-servant comes in to take a glass with him

before setting out. He tels me that many of the chateau people are very poor, and that some fine old places are in the hands of Jews, and occupied by them.

Morlaix is a large town with the finest viaduct in Europe, crossing the valley — some three hundred yards long and over seventy yards high. You can see the weathercock of the church below as you stand up there.

One of the charms of walking is that fresh people are met daily. To-day I meet a soldier, an Anglo-Indian. As we sit talking in the hotel smoke-room after dinner a little beggar boy pops in, only to be instantly repulsed by my friend, who



DRESS SEEN AT MORLAIX.

threatens him with the stick. This is not at all well received by a lady close by, who points out that he only asked for the *petit sou*, which she immediately gives him. Beggary had need flourish here. I noticed men drive in to market in goat skins, which, together with their

quaint broad-trimmed beaver hats, with wide velvet ribbons and buckle, make them look striking. There are some fine old houses here in excellent state of preservation. I am told that many years ago cholera raged in this neighbourhood and decimated the population. The Curé of the village, on being asked what precautionary measures he had taken, invited his interrogator round to the churchyard and showed him a dozen graves he had dug in advance. There are some curious customs which obtain in these parts. As many as two or three hundred guests are invited to a wedding, and they each bring some little present of provisions, useful articles, or money. This is often the only contribution towards house-keeping which the native married couple get.

At birth celebrations bread and spiced wine are brought in by the neighbouring mothers, who ask the favour of being allowed to suckle the infant for a few moments. Often the child is passed in this manner from one to another, who reverently look upon the new arrival as being sent from heaven.

In country districts the professional beggar is welcome. He is generally an old man, who, in return for the meat and drink given to him, recounts the news of the district, and sometimes sings or recites poetry. He is always welcome to a seat at the foyer, or ingle nook. The Bretons are hospitable, and in the country places alway

offer cider and bread to travellers. They are generally ignorant of anything except their own work, which is generally on the land, or fishing off the coast. Education is improving this ignorance. I talked with a great many boys in French, and find they also spoke Breton. They are quite well-behaved lads. The village priest is not merely a spiritual minister, but is regarded as a friend and counsellor in all affairs.

To-day I walk to see the Pardon at Pleyber Christ, but am too late to get into the church.

I see all the costumes, however.

The men's are all black, with wide-brimmed hat and white front, with multi-buttoned waistcoat. The

women wear pretty lace caps, rather like a coronet, and mantles of many colours, some faded, and presenting rather artistic shades of red and



PEASANT GIRL AT PLEYBER CHRIST.

green and yellow. Several were fine, tall women, which is the exception of what I have seen up to

now. I linger outside till the bell tolls, and all kneel, far away into the churchyard, for the benediction. So they remain for some time, and then out they flock into the village, and the merrymaking begins. There are fruit and cake stalls, and all sorts of refreshments. Every one is now bent on enjoyment, and I am told that things will "hum" before night. I am struck with the sudden change of mien. The deep reverence on the faces is now gone. Some faces of old women were marvellous pictures, all so wrinkled and furrowed and bronzed, with such a look of intensity and calm certainty about them. There was no nonsense about these faces, so rough and craggy; they were terribly in earnest and full of belief. You could read it in every line. I wonder if we Protestants are as earnest and as confident as they are? The innkeeper taps me on the shoulder and says my lunch is waiting. There is a great stir in the inn. One craggy old Breton who sat next to me is evidently very hungry, for he takes up his soup plate and drinks off the contents, bread, leeks, and all, without more ado. He then gives me a smile of amused satisfaction.

The road from Morlaix to Landerneau is a fine one, and would delight the heart of a cyclist or motorist. The red granite makes a good surface. The land right along shows evidences of high

culture. Fine crops are to be seen everywhere, in spite of the dry season. I pass St. Thegonnec, where there is a very fine Calvary. Everything looks bright after the rain during the past two nights. I shall be fortunate if rain falls only during the night, as it has done up to now, and I have already walked over 150 miles. As evening approaches I find myself reckoning on the good dinner and the good bed one surely gets—the pleasures of tramping. There is not-a-little of the animal about your *bon marcheur*, and he always gets well fed in France.

Yesterday I saw a young mother with infant in arms produce a silver snuff-box from her pocket and take a pinch, then offer the box to another woman seated close by. All the men hereabouts seem to be great smokers. As I pass along from Landerneau I observe some badly-farmed and badly-fenced land, showing carelessness in many ways.

At Landerneau by the river side are rows of washerwomen, “*lavandières*,” busy scrubbing clothes, but they are mostly dressed in black, and not so picturesque as I have seen elsewhere. This is a hilly country, and the roads are generally good. The cows are belled here and there, as in Switzerland, a pretty custom which puts life into the scene.

To any one wishing to get the most out of

time, I should recommend a walking tour. There is so much change, so much to see, that a fortnight seems like a month or more. Plenty of soap and water will keep your feet in fine form, which is the first essential. Your general health will be good by being all day in the open air and taking so much exercise. A good, easy tweed suit with big pockets—a grey West of England whipcord is most useful. It turns rain and wind, and always looks presentable where you can only have one suit. Puttees are decidedly the best leg gear; they are a support to the legs, and keep out rain and grit from the boots, which should be well-made shooting boots of calf, well nailed and tipped at heels. I once walked over five hundred miles in such a pair without repairs. You must have them straight at heel. With woollen underthings you should get your knapsack, with brushes, slippers, light waterproof or cloak, etc., under fifteen pounds weight in all. When in condition your feet require no special treatment, but to beginners, in hot weather, soft soap rubbed well over them will prevent blisters, or even cure them when they have come. Leave the soap on and pull the socks over it. You will never suffer from heat in the feet.

This is the country of old oak furniture and grandfather clocks. You see all kinds, some are very quaint and pretty. Hucksters' big caravans

rumble along the road to supply the villages with all kind of utensils and materials. The people are almost all of dark complexion. Here and there is found a light-haired, blue-eyed one, like the Norse.

I stay the night at the little inn at Le Faou. There is much merry-making outside, dancing and biniou- or bagpipe-playing, for there has been a wedding in the village to-day. The sea is quite near, and is romantically situated. It looks charming in the lovely sunset this evening, surrounded by coppice-covered hills, all so brilliant in colour.



YOUNG BRETON AT RUMENGOL.

There are many pretty caps to be seen among the fair revellers as I look down upon them from my little window. They tell me there is a ball this evening, but as I have a big day to-morrow, I go early to bed and miss that function.

Leaving at half-past seven next morning, Tuesday, the 18th, I make for Rumengol. Here I see the most beautiful and gorgeous chapel in France. I am told the statues are of solid gold. It is one of the great pilgrimages that of Rumengol, and the Pardon of Notre Dame de Tous Les Remèdes is the chief one in Brittany. The chapel and little village are prettily situated at the edge of a large forest. There is not much cultivated land here, but a great deal of coppice wood, and herds of little black cattle. From here on to Chateaulin is pleasant, but not particularly interesting, although Chateaulin itself is prettily situated alongside a handsome river. The natives about here give you a full-bodied sweet cider. All along the road are apple-trees with abundance of fruit. Some of the apples are delicious and most welcome. You can get surfeited with them. I march along, for I am anxious to reach Quimper to-night, where letters and papers await me. These are a great incentive to put the best foot foremost. I shall spend a day or two at Quimper, which is the capital of Finisterre. I see the spires at last, and am glad. It seems quite a fine, big place, and, once landed, I shall find out the quaint old spots in due course, for I know they are there.

IV. QUIMPER, CONCARNEAU, QUIMPERLÉ, AND
PONT AVEN.

No one comes to Brittany to find fine cathedrals, but to see quaint old houses and people and dress, queer costumes and manners. To my mind, however, Quimper has the finest cathedral in Brittany, equally grand and imposing inside and out. The town is prettily situated, the river Odet running right through it to the sea. I go to see the costumes at Pont L'Abbé, not put on for special occasion, but as they are worn every day. They are remarkably gorgeous; the waistcoat, resplendent with gold braid upon black or blue material, looks very gay. The men wear a large black beaver hat, with deep buckle behind and broad velvet strings. They wear blue or check trousers. The head-dress of the women and girls is remarkable. It consists of lace or white linen, with the body of the cap made of velvet covered with silver-work. The wee little girls are dressed just like the women—in fact, they are women in miniature, and certainly look most quaint and sometimes pretty. The place is full of beggars, who are very importunate. One old beggar man looked grotesque in clothes which had once been most elaborate, but of which only

very faint traces remained. The great "Pardon" function is over. People come great distances to be cured of rheumatic complaints, just as they go to Lannion for the cure of deafness. To Yandet pilgrims come to be cured of fatigue. Rumengol, where I was the other day, is renowned for the cure of all complaints, and for those who are not cured after repeated application, I am told that prayers are said for their prompt release. To the Pardon of St. Veronique young women go who want husbands. They throw a pin into the fountain, and if it falls in the middle the pilgrim is sure to be married that year. Horses and cattle take part in the ceremony at other "Pardons,"—all relics of Pagan superstitious times.

There is an interesting museum at Quimper, where can be seen all the costumes of Brittany displayed on waxwork models; there is also a gallery of pictures, chiefly by Breton and French artists. Next day I pass several chateaux, but they mostly look abandoned and in poor repair.

Concarneau, the seat of the sardine industry, is a quaint, interesting town. You get warning of its trade from the smell of oil and fish long before you reach it. Nevertheless, I get an uncommonly good lunch here, and pass on for Pont Aven, the great resort of artists in Brittany. Had I the time I could easily spend a few days in Concarneau, with its quaint old

streets, walls, and harbour, to say nothing of the dress and manners of the fisher-folk, many of them knitting and sewing at their cottage doors. From here to Port Aven the land is of better quality and better tilled; a great deal of vegetables and fruit are grown. But the women here again are mere drudges. It is painful to see the heavy work they do, and its coarsening effect upon their physique. A sure sign of a low state of civilization.

I stay the night at Pont Aven. The hotel dining-room is filled with paintings in the panels all round, done by artists who have stayed here. Pont Aven is a pretty place, but one cannot remain at all the pretty places; so next morning, after being shown round by a good-natured resident in fancy vest and hat, I started out for Quimperlé.

What a pleasure it is to be independent of hall-porters, etc., and able to shoulder all your luggage at a moment's notice and march away. Of course, there are times of fag and grind in walking, as in any other sport. So much the better. They serve to make you appreciate the brighter side the more.



OLD MAN AT QUIMPERLÉ.

To-day there is nothing specially charming along the road to Quimperlé. A well-wooded country with chateaux here and there, and apple-trees in plenty growing along the roadsides. It is amusing to hear the different accounts of a given



A FAIR DEVOTEE IN A CHURCH AT QUIMPERLÉ.

place. One man tells me there is nothing particularly grand about Quimperlé; another that it is undoubtedly the prettiest town in Brittany, and so on all along. One must go and see for one's self.

Quimperlé is reached at last, and as I tramp down the hill I am inclined to agree with the latter—that it is the prettiest town

in Brittany, and almost Venetian in style in some respects. Quimperlé is said to be the cheapest and best place to live in in the whole country. I had no fault to find with Pont Aven yesterday

on that score, for at the best hotel they only charged me 4s. 2d. for an excellent seven-course dinner, with good drinkable wine *ad lib.*, first-rate bed and room with electric light, and "café au lait" breakfast. This may not last long, for they have just opened a railway which, a resident told me, is likely to spoil the place and cause the quaint dress of the people to be a thing of the past. People have a peculiar custom here in transfers of land. The buyer is handed with the deeds a clod of soil, a cup of water out of the well, and a bundle of wood to light a fire in the farmstead. There is plenty of fine trout fishing to be had free, and one might do worse than take Quimperlé for two or three weeks' fishing, for, as I have said, the living is remarkably good and cheap. At the inns or smaller hotels it is absurdly cheap. The people are most obliging, and do all they can to make you comfortable. There are six Englishmen staying in the hotel here—artists, anglers, and others, and they all seem well pleased with the place.

V. TO PONT SCORFF.

From Quimperlé I walk to Pont Scorff and on to Hennebont, where we put up for the night, for I now have a friend who has taken the walking fever, and asks if he may accompany me

for a day or two, to which I make no objection. A highly cultivated man, who has been everywhere, speaks French and Italian and English, and who sings the Italian operas with unusual taste. Yes, my friend seems to have done everything and gone everywhere except on a walking tour. He has luggage enough to fit out a dozen, so I show him how to pack away a few necessities in a small bag, and away we go. Art, literature, travel and experiences, music, together with some refrain or other from Verdi or Donizetti, rendered in a fine deep baritone, all go to make our tramping very delightful, the only drawback being that one does not observe one's surroundings so acutely, nor speak so frequently to the natives. However, I have got more than half-way through my task, so I can afford to take advantage of so delightful a change, which is not likely to present itself again, for in addition to his unusual accomplishments my companion walks well, and is altogether a fine, well-set-up gentleman, who has had every advantage which education, culture, and wealth can accomplish. Later on I found he was an Austrian nobleman of high position at Court.

The country hereabouts, for we are now in Morbihan, is not particularly interesting, but well wooded; indeed, you may call them forests—chiefly of oak and fir. We are still favoured with beautifully fine weather, with a cooling breeze all

day, ideal for walking; so we tramp away in fine form, making a good long stay for substantial lunch at mid-day. You eat and drink more when you have company. They have done us so well to-day at Landevant that we had to sit an hour sipping coffee before we could march again, so about six o'clock we swung into Auray, remarkable for its shrine of St. Anne, the Virgin's mother, and pleasing to us this evening for its good hotel, where we are done right royally. The dress in Morbihan is much the same as in Finis-terre, excepting a little difference in the women's caps and a large check bodice of blue and black, which they affect. The men, rather less in stature than in the north, seem active. Here again one sees frequent cases of



A MORBIHAN PEASANT.

drunkenness. We walk out from Auray to the plain of Carnac, where are the finest Druidical remains in the world. Although most extensive and wonderful, I am rather disappointed with the remains, expecting stones on a much grander scale. You often experience this feeling when you have read glowing and often exaggerated accounts of anything. Still Carnac is a great sight, and I would not have missed visiting it. There will



AT CARNAC.

soon be quite a new seaside town here, for a large hotel and scores of villas of all sizes have been built. Certainly the sea here is very grand. We sit under the verandah of the hotel and look out upon the vast expanse of brilliant blue and emerald, and hear the mighty roar around us. This is as fine a sight of its kind as could be seen anywhere. The sky is absolutely cloudless, and

all is bathed in sunshine, but a cool breeze comes across the water and makes the whole perfect. The climate must be exceedingly mild, for figs are flourishing in the gardens around. Straight out is Belle Isle, where Sarah Bernhardt has her chateau, all so wild and remote—an old feudal castle which she has restored, and to which she



ANOTHER MORBIHAN PEASANT.

retires occasionally for rest and quiet. To the right is Oleron, renowned for its continuous line of dangerous rocky coast. Despite all this loveliness, danger is lurking everywhere. The boatmen will only venture to take you across there occasionally, when all is quite favourable.

With all these precautions accidents and loss of life are, it seems, very frequent. We are landsmen, and after an excellent lunch are quite satisfied to tramp back to Auray this lovely afternoon, chatting away about the literature of France, till the fifteen kilometres seem to vanish quickly. My friend considers Balzac the best all-round French writer of modern times. He gives you the best and most reliable account of every grade of life in France.

We meet beggar children everywhere. It is a pity to see these little things brought up to such a life throughout Brittany. You don't find it elsewhere in France, neither do you meet with equal drunkenness. Frenchmen tell me they are ashamed of it, and make it a handle against the intense religious feeling of the Breton. Religion, drunkenness, stupidity, dirt, want of progress are the usual terms Frenchmen employ when alluding to the Breton. Not very charitable terms certainly, but I have heard them half a dozen times. The country about here cannot be called interesting to the tourist. A large part of the land is waste and forest. The little which is under cultivation looks much neglected, and the cattle are a very poor lot altogether. You are bound to come to the conclusion that here in Morbihan they do not make the most of the land. The cottages are wretchedly dirty, although not

badly built, for granite and oak are cheap. You see cows sharing the same apartment as the cottagers. And the people seem happy and fairly healthy, although not remarkably robust. Indeed, you cannot walk far without seeing cases of disease and much dirt. The worst districts in England or Scotland are infinitely superior in the physique of their poorest people to the best I have seen hereabouts. Cider is the national beverage in Brittany as in Normandy, but natives are not satisfied with cider alone. They—that is, the poorer classes—drink a cheap, fiery, bad brandy. To each glass of cider they take a small glass of this wretched fire-water, and profound drunkenness is the result. I am told that the French Government is taking the matter in hand energetically, for it is becoming the most serious evil which has ever overtaken this part of France. The better classes are temperate, differing in many respects from the poorer people—particularly in religious devotion. In this respect they often go to the opposite extreme, and may be termed irreligious. At least so one concludes from the conversation and their outspoken manner when you talk to them on these points. People have told me that the Breton is suspicious of the Englishman, and will tell him nothing. I have not found that to be the case. One and all have been extremely kind in answering my numerous in-

quiries, which would have bored most people. But you are bound to keep on asking every day if you intend getting to the bottom of matters.

VI.

I reach Vannes, which is the capital of Morbihan, and a very old city, dating back, indeed, to the time of Julius Cæsar. Here you see fine examples of old houses and shops, also the old city walls, of which, however, only a small portion remains. It is the cleanest town I have yet passed through, and has a fine old cathedral of unique design. A wedding party pass by in eight or nine open carriages, all in native costume, and with biniou-, or bagpipes, and clarionet-players, all singing Breton songs merrily. A few days could be spent here enjoyably, but we shoulder our knapsacks early this (Thursday) morning and leave Vannes behind us before seven, for we must get to Ploermel to-night. My friend asks to go with me for a day or two longer. He is so delighted with this free-and-easy life; and as he walks well and is altogether delightful company, I make no objection. I am afraid we are busy with other thoughts than of what we see around us. I talk less to people, and probably miss a good deal. The country, too, is not so interesting about here, and certainly the people are. The land is poor, and only a small

part is cultivated, and that badly. But the weather is glorious, and as we march away in the sunrise, feeling in the best possible form, we take a farewell look at Vannes, my friend trolls Verdi joyously, and the walking begins for another day. We pass a poacher-looking fellow with "pen-bas," a stout cudgel with leather thong for handhold, and the thick end to the ground—a very potent truncheon, equal to any emergency. Now we are in the heart of forest land, reaching right away to Rennes. We see several groups of sportsmen, partridge-shooting chiefly, and the get-up of some is quite amusing. Wild boar-hunting does not begin till November, but they tell us we are now in the district of it, and may see a boar any day.



BACK VIEW IN THE MARKET-
PLACE, VANNES.

The people are all poor—at any rate those in this district. The cost of living is a fair guide to the measure of a country's wealth. Here it is cheap. I have made the same comparison in Spain. We see folks threshing the "ble noir," or buckwheat. They use the flail; the women work harder at it than the men. Downright hard work, drudgery, and toil are written all

over their faces, and their coarsened limbs. And you pity them, wondering how such slavery can exist in a country which is supposed to be the centre of all freedom and enlightenment. But they are lamentably behind English people—a generation, ay, more than a generation—in all social and

domestic progress. Of this I am more convinced every time I walk in France. You cannot judge of these things by what you see in fine cities and large towns. You must get into the country and see what the peasantry are doing there, and how they live. You will then judge how much better off are our working population in Great Britain, and how much better are the sanitary conditions in which they live, both in towns and rural districts. I have alluded to



SKETCH NEAR PLOERMEL.

the drunkenness rife in Brittany. There is nothing so bad as here in any agricultural district in France, nor could you find any approach to it in England.

We are constantly being told what a drunken

people we are, and France is held up as a pattern of sobriety by people who mean well and who read statistics. These people would do well to go patiently through this department of the country, to mix with the people of all grades, and see for themselves. See

what deadly drugs they drink, compared with which our strongest English beer might be styled milk itself. It is the question of the hour this increasing consumption of absinthe and bad brandy. Over and over again have I been told it for many years past, and I hear it again to-night.



SEEN IN THE CATHEDRAL, VANNES.

It is eating away the energy and physique of the people. Here in agricultural Brittany one sees it more plainly than elsewhere, particularly in this part of Brittany. The cottages are wretched; the

people look cheerless; all so depressed and filthy—the priests and the magnificent churches excepted. You are bound to ask—why cannot the clergy teach cleanliness and decency at least to these poor folk? Surely it might be done without being too progressive or without exercising too much freedom of thought.

We are right glad to get to Ploermel, made famous by Meyerbeer's opera, *The Pardon of Ploermel*.

Next morning we visit the cascade where Dinorah fell in, and was brought back to her senses after being mad in her love affair. The late dry season has dried up the waterfall. We visit the cathedral, which is very fine. There was a notice posted up prohibiting women in cycling costume from entering the cathedral.

Bullocks are used for traction about here, and we actually saw a couple of milk cows harnessed to one wagon. Again, one notices the dowdy dress of the ladies everywhere, even in considerable towns like Vannes. I think that has often been remarked upon and applies pretty extensively to French towns, excepting Paris, of course. By comparison there must have been either great progression with us, or retrogression in the French provinces.

We notice two or three cretins, or imbeciles, such as one sees in the deep sunless valleys of the

Alps, but which you would hardly expect to find here.

At Plelan we put up for the night, for we are now in the heart of the mystical forest of Broceliande, famous in the annals of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. It is a curious old place this inn, the most queer rambling place I ever came across. Neither of us could find our way downstairs next morning. In case of fire one would have had to get out of the window, for such a labyrinth of passages and secret doors I never saw. The place must have been designed to trap people who stayed here in the old days. We found our way downstairs, after a good laugh and another investigation of the place. We have to walk round an old staircase, open to the elements, to reach our bedrooms. But they made us very comfortable in their way, although everything was primitive and not very clean.

We came to the conclusion, too, that we were both unromantic, for here in the forest of old romance we had slept soundly for over eight hours, and never a dream of King Arthur, his Round Table Knights, or of the Magician Merlin.

My friend has travelled all over Europe and other continents, and will have it that in this part of Brittany the people are the dirtiest and most drunken of any he has met. For dirt he thinks the Bas Breton equals the Pole.

After breakfast we pick up our knapsacks and sticks and out we march into the lovely forest. The weather is still brilliantly fine, with never a cloud, day after day, and quite a Neapolitan sky, against which the pines and rocks stand out sharp



LADY NEAR AURAY.

and clear. You feel so full of health and vigour, too. We laugh and chat away on every topic, and my friend tells me of lands I know not, but which he has visited. Of charming Constantinople and the Golden Horn; of a winter's sleighing in Russia

under a similarly clear sky, but cold, and weird, and invigorating. And so we reach Saint Thuriel, which yields nothing better than coarse bread, butter, and wine. No matter, we are hungry and enjoy it, in spite of the wretched surroundings—mud floor, with hens, dog, and cat waiting for our crumbs. They are all afraid of water and fresh air here. We are constantly opening windows for ventilation which appear to have been long closed.

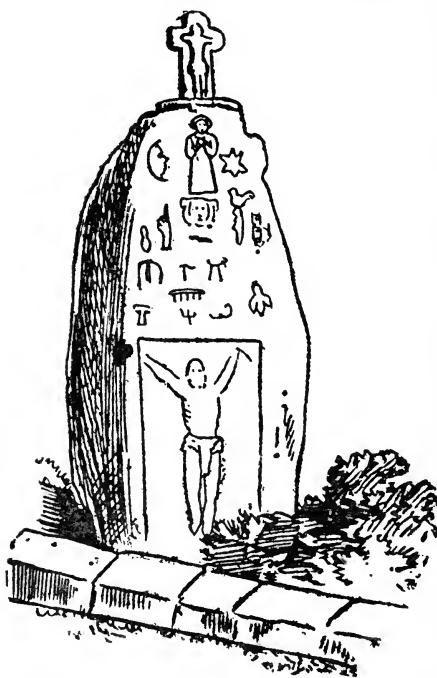
We both tried to get some information about the place from the woman who served us, but not a word could we extract, nor would she allow me to sketch her. Money failed to tempt her. Of course she spoke Breton, and no doubt French as well—if she liked. You find them very cunning, often pretending they don't understand you. There are still, however, half a million people in Brittany who cannot speak French, and I should say that a large part are found in the district of Morbihan. In the north they all speak French, even in the most remote districts on the coast. But, as I have said, they are a finer, keener, more intelligent people, right away from Dinan to Brest than hereabouts. It is surprising to find so marked a difference in a country of its size.

We get to Rennes this Saturday evening and are installed in a good hotel. Rather different from last night's quarters. Madame Bernhardt is staying at Rennes on her way southward. This

evening a discussion as to her age arose. One Frenchman vowed he saw her act in Paris in 1861. All allow that she is the most wonderful actress France ever saw, and still retains extraordinary powers.

AT RENNES.

Rennes, the capital of Brittany, is a noteworthy



MENHIR, TREGASTEL.

town, well kept and clean. There are several fine churches and a cathedral, with archbishop. The cathedral dates back to the fourth century, but was reconstructed about two hundred years ago. The decorations inside are gorgeous. Then there is the new church of St. Anne, quite

majestic in its proportions. The city is altogether

worth a visit, and is the most imposing and busiest place I have seen in Brittany, although divested of nearly all its old houses and shops. There are fine avenues of trees, but the surrounding country



SATAN AND THE HOLY WATER: CATHEDRAL, DINAN

is not particularly pretty. The highest mountains in Brittany, called the Montagnes Noirs, are mere hills under one thousand feet.

To-day, Sunday, is comparatively a day of rest,

although we visit churches and walk round the district generally—a dozen miles, which brings up my total mileage walked to four hundred. I have never experienced a drop of rain this tramp so far, and have been out of doors twelve hours a day. I am now in the last lap, and should welcome a good shower of rain any day. The country is absolutely dried up.

On Monday morning, 1st October, I start out alone, for I have left my friend at Rennes, and I am now free to do just as I like, although my task is now nearly finished. The country begins to look more civilized, and more like Normandy, for apple orchards are to be seen everywhere, bearing excellent crops. They are gathering them for the cider press, and at one place they are pressing by horse-power. I talk to several farmers here, but of course the continued drought is the common topic of conversation. There are some handsome residences of the *noblesse* about here, but the occupants do not get on pleasantly with their tenantry generally. There is not that mutual good feeling which prevails with us, probably owing to the lack of sport. At least, so the occupiers tell me. Indeed, indifference and distrust between landlords and tenantry prevail everywhere.

Well-to-do farmers wear the blouse and are proud of it. They have never been brought up to anything else, but I cannot say that I admire

it. They are mostly genial and ready to talk about their affairs, and always pleased to be told how we live in England. The manners of Frenchmen generally have often been grossly exaggerated as being eminently superior to our own. Over and over again I am convinced of this fallacy. They are more ready to bow and raise the hat than we are, but if you look deeper you are bound to conclude that they are by no means better mannered at heart. Their manners at table are not nice, as every traveller knows, and their general behaviour to ladies leaves much to be desired.

The Breton people are hardly representative of the French. They are neither so sharp-witted nor so gay. As a Frenchman told me, the Breton *manque de tête* is short of head-piece, surely a very serious curtailment. I have found this to be



THE BINIOU PLAYER.

perfectly true. You have to explain exactly what you want, and be precise in the least detail, or you will suffer annoyance. Nevertheless they are generally kind, and I have found them obliging, and most reasonable in their charges at the inns.



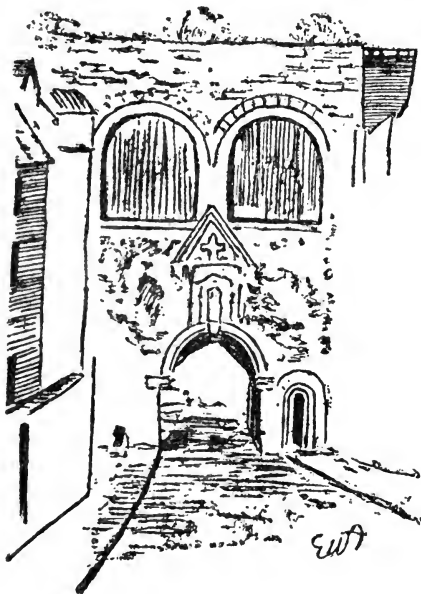
FARMER, NEAR PAIMPOL.



PEASANT WOMAN, NEAR RENNES.

Brittany is not as picturesque all round as one is led to expect, and as railways and motors become more numerous, it will become less interesting in its habits and customs and dress. It is well worth visiting on motor, and you find garage accommodation everywhere, for the French are

great motorists. They are also even more reckless in their rate of speed than we are, I saw a car driven through the old, narrow streets of Guingamp at a rate which made one almost shudder, shaving past obstacles in the most reckless manner. Yet no notice was taken of it. I do not consider



RUE JERSUAL, DINAN.

the average car I saw to be equal to what one sees at home, in spite of what one hears about the superiority of French cars.

I am walking away in grand form, and as the distance to Dinan is more than one day's com-

fortable walk I arrange in my mind to stop at Becherel for the night. But a gentleman passes me in a trap and asks me to mount. This is the first lift I have had since I started. He is a cider and wine merchant, and tells me much about the country, and also that the inn at Becherel is very poor. He would advise me to tramp on to Dinan. So after riding four or five miles I take his advice, and get into Dinan this evening just as the rain begins to fall; indeed, I had not been indoors five minutes before it poured down. I therefore consider my walk finished, having accomplished with ease what I set out to do. The distance walked is 685 kilometres, or 428 miles. On no day have I fatigued myself. These notes and sketches, as I have pointed out in my Preface, do not pretend by any means to be artistic productions. They are hurried prose and line memoranda—never intended for publication, and done mostly when resting by the wayside.

From Harrogate to Land's End.

(1905.)

I. WETHERBY: POMFRET: TICKILL: MANSFIELD.

JANUARY is not an ideal month for a walking tour, but on this occasion a friend wishes to join me, and he can only go in January. We start off at eight and are both in fine fettle, carrying twelve-pound knapsacks. My friend carries an overcoat in addition.

We go through Spofforth, where the famous "Blind Jack," or John Metcalf, the road-maker, lived a hundred years ago. He lost his sight at six and lived a blind man for eighty-seven years, during which time he laid out some of our finest turnpike roads. Smallpox deprived him of his sight, but the little fellow soon learned to make the best of his misfortune, and was not long in getting about the village of Knaresbro', where he was born. He played about with other boys, and was as nimble as most of them. He learned to swim, was a good musician, and rode horses at races, blind as he was. He later joined a regiment of volun-

teers, drove a stage waggon to York, engaged in horse-dealing, and was not averse to a little smuggling. Afterwards he turned road surveyor, and constructed roads in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Derbyshire, finally settling down at Spofforth, where he died in 1810, and where we notice his grave on our way past the church.

At Wetherby the weir is a bold curve over which the river Wharfe leaps for twelve feet, and further



"THE SWAN," ABERFORD.

down the river is a flint mill, where flints were ground of which pottery was made long ago. Many of the coaches were horsed at the "Angel" and the "Swan and Talbot" at Wetherby in the old days.

The "Angel" now stands as it did then. The "Swan and Talbot" is the older house of the two, and in its early days coaches changed horses there, but about 1824 the business fell away.

Besides the London coaches there were the Leeds and Newcastle, the Leeds and York, and the Carlisle, all stopping here, which made Wetherby a busy centre in the old days. Another famous old coaching-inn we pass is the "Swan," at Aberford.

We are now on the great North Road, and pass Bramham Park, the seat of Mr. Lane Fox, of hunting fame, who at one time drove the night coach to Edinburgh on this road. Outside Wetherby on this road stands the "Old Fox Inn," situated exactly midway between London and Edinburgh. Here is an old tree from which the sign-post used to hang, and the mile-post formerly stood at the foot of this tree showing "To London, 200 miles; to Edinburgh, 200 miles."

At Aberford we cross the famous Cock Beck, where the armies of the Yorkist and Lancastrian factions came into collision more than four centuries ago. The blood of the wounded flowed in many channels into the Cock, which carried its crimsoned waters into the Wharfe at Tadcaster. The chronicler tells us that the beck was choked with the bodies of the slain, and that no less than thirty-five thousand combatants perished.

At Pontefract we stay the night at a large new hotel, where we make the best of the fare and accommodation. When you have walked thirty miles you are not too exacting in your tastes.

If the food at our big hotel is indifferent the beer is excellent, and my friend does more than justice to it. In spite of my remonstrances, he had indulged during the day at the many wayside inns we passed, and was now dead beat in consequence. I couldn't persuade him that beer is fatal to easy walking if taken during the day; indeed, my experience is that the less liquid you take of any kind the better. I can now walk all day without liquid, and in far better form than ever I did when taking liquids. Afternoon tea may be taken if you have ten miles or so to finish the day, and nothing is so refreshing.

Next morning we see Pomfret Castle, at one time the residence and the prison-house of kings, and the scene of many a ghastly deed. It was built by Ilbert de Lacy in 1080, and was one of the most renowned fortresses in England. Here Richard the Second was murdered in 1399. It was garrisoned in 1644 and was besieged three times, being finally taken and dismantled in 1649. In fact, we find Pomfret Castle mentioned repeatedly in English history. The old town is now celebrated for its liquorice, which is made into a confection for curing coughs and sore throats.

At Wentbridge we call at the "Blue Bell," one of the oldest licensed houses in the country. We are told that the licence was lost three hundred years ago, the landlord being convicted for harbouring

highwaymen. It was afterwards renewed. They show you the old signboard, dated 1633, which hangs behind the door for better preservation.

Our way is through Doncaster, renowned for its races and its butter-scotch, on to Tickill, where we put up for the night, and are made exceedingly comfortable at a small inn, where the landlady does her level best to please us. The beef-steak, the ham and eggs, everything are of the best, and we sit by the cosy parlour fire listening to the church bells, for there is a ringing contest on this evening, and Tickill prides itself on its bell ringing, and not without good reason. We enjoy the music immensely, and are pleased to invite the ringers to a mug of ale when they adjourn to our inn later on. They all have what they want, and the reckoning is remarkably moderate. And real good fellows they are, the conversation being full of humour and good-natured banter, chiefly concerning bell-ringing, of course, with all its intricacies and traditions. At ten o'clock the men go home and the inn is as quiet as the church. Now we creep to our beds after another really good day such as ordinary fashionable touring could never furnish. Tickhill Castle has a wet moat which is now rarely seen. The Castle is in part occupied as a residence.

Passing through Worksop we come to the Dukeries, but these mansions have no charm for

us at present. We are glad to give a wide berth to the innumerable waggonette parties and peg away to Mansfield, our next resting-place, where we are again fortunate in the choice of our inn, a grand old-fashioned house and good.

II. ASHBOURNE: BURTON-ON-TRENT: LICHFIELD.

We are not so lucky at Matlock, where our food and accommodation at a big, empty hotel is not equal to what the inns usually give us. There is no one else staying in the hotel, and being quite out of the season we feel a cold cheerlessness about everything. However, we are tired and hungry, and will put up with anything for a night.

Next day we sally forth in the hazy winter air, which prevents us from seeing all the beauties around. This is a drawback to winter touring; although the air is sharp and invigorating, perfect for walking, you cannot see the distant scenery. Then again, in winter your walking hours are limited to seven or eight each day, unless you like to walk in the dark, and this is not enjoyable to me.

We stay at Ashbourne, and are once more in luck's way in our quarters for the night. And so it is that the good, comfortable inns are for-

tunately in the majority, just as good people are in the majority. We think no more of the cheerless place we stayed at last night, but revel at our ease in the comfortable parlour with its big fire and cosy chairs this evening, after our excellent repast of tender steak and chipped potatoes, with good beer in old-fashioned tankards. There is a church at Ashbourne called "The Pride of the Peak," on account of its magnificent spire.

And so we make for Burton-on-Trent, a dirty, uninteresting town famous for beer and nothing else. I think our inn was instituted for the sale of beer alone, for the food was execrable and the landlord a man of peremptory, over-bearing manner, who evidently would prefer selling ale to catering for wayfarers. All our arts of conciliation and persuasion were lost upon this gentleman, so we left him in his glory among his taps and bottles, and were glad to get away next morning after a struggle with badly-cooked American bacon and wretched coffee. We ought to have chosen tea, for you can never expect to get good coffee at such a place; indeed, good coffee is rarely met with in England, whereas in France you get the very best at every wayside inn you call at. Fortunately, our better-class inns and hotels are beginning to know the value and importance of really good coffee, and they are consequently learning to make it. Plenty of good, freshly-

ground coffee and abundance of fresh hot milk is the only secret, but somehow these have hitherto been thought extravagances by us English people, who think nothing of cooking twice as much bacon and eggs for breakfast as are reasonably required.

And so we march out of this city of beer for the fine old cathedral city of Lichfield—a long day's tramp. We call at an inn about mid-day to get our bread and cheese and beer. Our host is just the reverse type of man to the Burton landlord. He is a dapper little fellow of seventy, but lithe and active, and evidently a keen sportsman. He had been busy salting a pig, but came in to have a chat and a mug of beer with us. In the parlour is a collection of sporting trophies—foxes' masks, badgers, otters, fish of all kinds, and a score or two of fine sporting prints. The old chap entertains us with accounts of his hunting and fishing adventures. He, too, had been a great walker in his day, and tells us of many a long tramp he has accomplished.

Regretting the decadence of walking, he wonders what sort of men the rising generation will make, who neither can or will walk a score miles without being dead beaten. He could easily walk his forty miles on end up to quite recently, and now could do his five-and-twenty as cheerfully as a lark, he states. He attributes his good health and activity at seventy to

his constant walking exercise all through his life. He never rode if he could possibly and conveniently walk the twenty miles in and out of Lichfield, and thought nothing of carrying heavy parcels, which made the present generation of "namby-pambys," as he called them, stare in wonderment. I ask if he would tramp with us for a day or two, and he seems so delighted at the prospect that I thought he was going to accept my invitation. I never met a brighter, more alert old man in my life. He was truly a credit to his business, and I wish we had more such men as landlords of our inns. We should hear less about the drink traffic and its evils, for you could see the old fellow was a temperate man. He was one of nature's gentlemen, and yet a publican.

We get to a good old hostelry at Lichfield, where they do us well. We could stay a week here under such excellent catering, and then have been sorry to leave. We walk round the sleepy old city, and, of course, have a good look at the cathedral, which is magnificent, and all in such fine state of preservation.

Dr. Johnson was born at Lichfield two centuries ago. With all his rudeness and rugged manner he was one of the greatest wits and men of letters of his own or any other age. His immense range of knowledge, his clear insight of character, his excellent common-sense, wit, and judgment are

unsurpassed. No man read more, and no man remembered better what he had read. He could get the essence of a book in a very short time, yet he hardly ever read a book through. Johnson had in Boswell the best biographer of all time—and to him we owe a large part of what we know of this truly great man from Lichfield. At every turn, as we potter about the old city, one can hardly forget the ponderous form of Johnson, as we know it from his picture by the equally famous Sir Joshua Reynolds, his friend.

III. STRATFORD-ON-AVON: WORCESTER: TEWKESBURY.

Our next journey was to the fine old county town where Britain's most illustrious poet and dramatist was born. On the way we meet a man on tramp, who follows us into a roadside inn at lunch time. The poor fellow is famished, and, of course, we give him food and drink. He is an educated man who has evidently given way to drink and is broken down. It is painful to see this fine young fellow of thirty in such a plight, more particularly as there seems little hope of his ever being reclaimed. He appears hopelessly lost, having apparently no ability or any disposition to save himself from utter physical and moral ruin. He walks with us for an hour or so, but I am

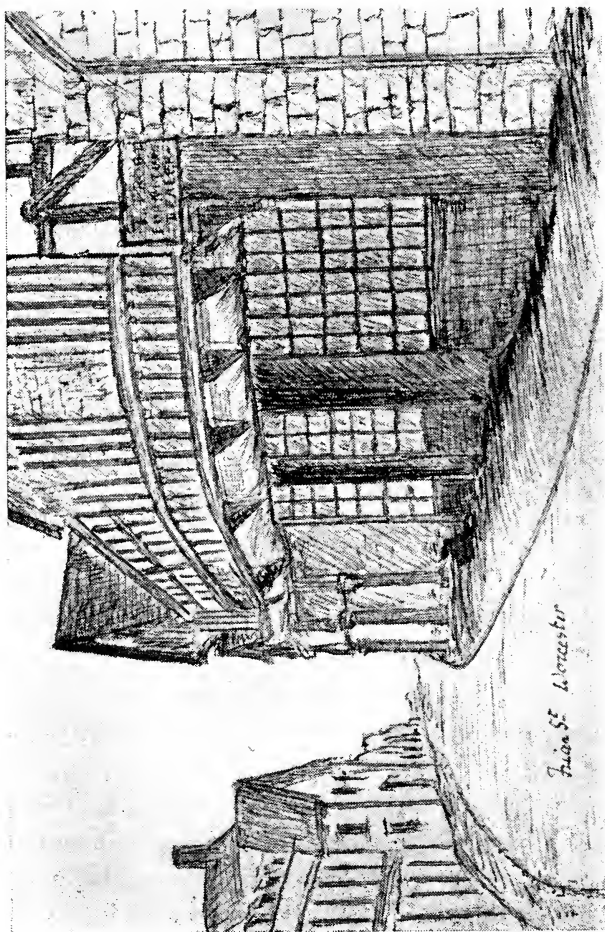
afraid my entreaties made no impression upon the poor fellow, and so he drops behind, thanking me, and was lost, although I have often thought of him.

We feel happy directly we enter the fine old inn at Stratford-on-Avon, for there is every evidence of comfort, with no small element of refinement. A good inn gives you a favourable impression of a place at once. It is the key to your appreciation of all around you; and if in addition to good fare you find decent people, as we do here, your verdict is likely to be highly favourable to the place.

Miss Marie Corelli, the novelist, lives at Stratford, and naturally forms a subject of conversation. We discuss the extraordinary sales of her writings, her many novels with their splendid titles and huge successes. Truly she must have proved a gold-mine to her publishers. She has a great love for music and flowers.

This is my third visit to Stratford, but my friend has not been here before. Therefore we make the usual round and see the sights, which are interesting by their connection with Shakespeare.

The country around here is pretty, and is a fine, well-tilled agricultural district; indeed I have more than once been well impressed with Warwickshire as being one of the best-kept counties of my acquaintance. The thatching of the cottages is carried to a fine art, as is also the



FRIAR STREET, WORCESTER.

excellent hedging and ditching. Wherever you go you see evidences of capital well laid out and resources well husbanded. I should think large estates are the rule here and small holdings the exception. We saw scores of lambs at this early season. Business compels my companion to leave me at Worcester.

To Land's End I walk alone, after my usual fashion of complete independence. At Worcester I put up at a remarkably good inn, which gives me a favourable impression of the old cathedral city. The cathedral dates back six centuries; and although somewhat plain outside, has a remarkably fine interior, the stained glass and the roof being very pleasing. I attend a service and hear some fine singing, which greatly impresses me. Such functions are particularly impressive when one is touring in this way. You can enter truly into the spirit of it all, and imbibe freely the grand religious fervour which pervades the whole ceremony. The mind is free and open to receive all impressions as they should be received, with gladness and gratefulness.

From Worcester to Malvern is but a short walk, but I put up for the night, making only a short day of it. One cannot always have long, plodding days. Here I get cider, for I am now in the cider and perry country, where these are drunk as commonly as beer; and very good and whole-

some they are. I am told cider is good for gout and rheumatism.

The waiter at the inn is a German hailing from Carlsbad. He can just struggle through with his English, and seems grateful for a little prompting now and then. But he keeps on talking as much as possible, evidently intent on learning all he can. There is none of the stupidity and self-consciousness which the English waiter would have exhibited under similar conditions. The young fellow makes the most of his chances, and this disposition accounts for foreigners being better linguists than we are. They are more painstaking, less conceited and self-conscious than English waiters.

Next morning, as I march away down the hill, I meet a fine-looking old man, and I ask him to tell me all about Malvern. He seems pleased at my request, for he has evidently nothing to do, and strolls and chats with me for an hour or so. He points out Pickersleigh House in the distance, said to be a hiding-place of Charles I., and famed in the district as an artistic old house. I spend a little time in sketching it. At parting the old fellow wishes to give me a sum to reckon up. He is a retired policeman, and had walked twelve miles daily, Sundays included, for twenty-seven years. How many miles had he walked in all, and how many times round

the world did it represent? And so with a laughing "Good morning," we parted: and he may have thought that he had given me a poser.

I tramp away, with the beautiful Malvern hills to my right. There are immense stretches of common land hereabouts, and fine grazing land it is. These lands are looked after by a bailiff,



PICKERSLEIGH HOUSE, MALVERN.

called the "Hayward." I pass the famous "Friars' Elm," measuring five yards in circumference. Till lately it stood sixty feet high, but was blown down by some boys on the 5th November with gunpowder. The cottages hereabouts are of brick and wood, rather like those you see in Cheshire.

At Tewkesbury I reach a good old-fashioned

inn, "The Old Black Bear." According to an announcement on the signboard, Mr. Pickwick stayed here with his friends, and found everything to their liking, especially the port wine, of which they consumed many bottles.

Tewkesbury is the quaintest and cleanest town I ever visited, and is, in fact, claimed by the



"THE OLD BLACK BEAR," TEWKESBURY.

inhabitants to be the cleanest town in England. Pottering about, one cannot fail to notice how carefully whitewashed the back streets are, and how scrupulously clean the roads and streets are kept. The abbey is certainly one of the most charming buildings of its kind, and is in a fine state of preservation. There is an air of quiet repose and dignity about the place which one cannot fail

to appreciate. It is indeed a rare old-world locality. Here the Severn and Avon rivers join, and are navigable away to the Bristol Channel.

In the commercial room of the inn I find a Jewish commercial traveller whose business is to call upon people at their homes and sell them spec-



DICK TURPIN'S OAK, TEWKESBURY.

tacles, whether they need them or not, a precarious business, he slyly remarks, but profitable. A little puffy, pale-faced man is he. He stares with amazement when I tell him I am walking to Land's End. He shouldn't like to do it; no, he would rather hawk spectacles from door to door. He liked to be "making something," and

had no hobby out-of-doors, save a trip to Margate in the full season, when there was "something going off." He must have company and "something doing." "You," he states, "are full of accomplishments, and can go anywhere and enjoy yourself quite independently of any one. I cannot

do that. For me everything in this world is business; yes, sir, business."

I walk through Cheltenham, or rather take the tram through the town as far as Charlton Kings. Up the hill and I pass "Seven



CIRENCESTER.

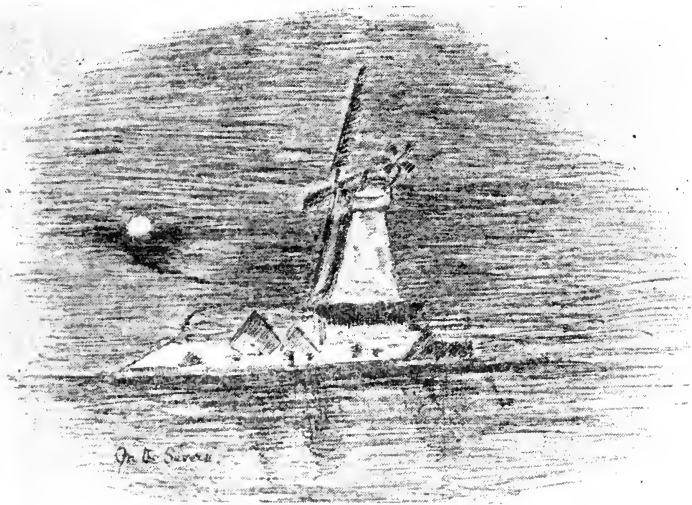
Springs," where the Thames rises.

Approaching Cirencester, a jolly-looking farmer gives me a lift in his gig, and tells me a great deal about the surrounding country, and that there are five packs of foxhounds in the district. There is a fine cathedral-like church at Cirencester.

IV. CIRENCESTER: MALMESBURY: CHIPPENHAM: BATH.

My way out of Cirencester lies through Lord Bathurst's beautiful park, one of the most striking

features of which is a particularly fine broad avenue of trees. The park is free to the public and very extensive; one can walk for five miles in it in one direction. As I march along a military band from the barracks strikes up a lively air, which pulls one together a bit. On my way to Malmesbury I pass the famous Agricultural College, and



ON THE SEVERN.

shortly walk out of Gloucester into Wiltshire. Malmesbury is a pretty, clean old place with a grand old abbey, which, with its outbuildings and gardens, at one time covered an area of forty-five acres. There is a very handsome market cross full of beautiful details, which I tried to sketch.

Chippenham is noted for its dairy produce and its bacon-curing. Here I stay the night, and am in the merry company of commercial men at the inn. The proprietor demurred at treating me on commercial room terms, which are, of course, more moderate than coffee-room prices; but I won the day.

After early breakfast of good bacon and eggs and tea (which latter is invariably taken in the commercial room in preference to coffee) I get away in the crisp morning air, and am in a fine agricultural country again; indeed there is nothing else but cheese and butter-making and bacon-curing here. The famous Wiltshire smoked bacon is world-renowned.

I overtake a clergyman taking a walk with his dog. He is a fine, substantial old fellow, who soon makes friends and tells me all about his walking tours in Switzerland; how he was benighted, and had eighteen hours of it one day. Also about a party of climbers whom he met on Mont Blanc, and who afterwards invited him to dinner at their hotel—a most distinguished party, including two foreign princes. He talks about canoeing up the Severn, and being overcome by the “agir,” or tidal wave, getting overturned, losing his canoe, and swimming to shore. His long tramps are over, but he is looking forward to his summer holiday, when Switzerland will again see him on

the road. There is no place like Switzerland for the walking man, he said. He wrote to me afterwards, hoping I had reached my "ultima thule" safely, and that all the purposes of the tour were fully realized. Undoubtedly he was a fine sporting parson, such as one rarely meets with now-a-days. I wish we had more men like him in the Church for the good example and vigorous manliness they would show the rising generation.



NEAR MALMESBURY.

At a police station on my way there was an announcement "Vagrants relieved here."

Another lift on the road makes me think this is a driving tour; but I cannot resist the offer, and why should I? I have no wagger to walk every yard of the road, and one always learns something about the country and the people in this way.

This time it is a farmer who tills a thousand acres and is an ardent foxhunter, as people seem to be hereabouts. He tells me they have had a pretty good season up to now, and that the Duke will most likely hunt till May. He speaks of the "thrusters" from Bristol who came out to show their fine clothes and their fine horses, but never their fine performances. Whenever hounds got right away these gentry generally contrived to slip out of sight somehow or other, and were as likely to be found at the nearest inn getting a whisky and soda as anywhere. "Surely," I said, "there are exceptions!" "Not many," said the countryman. And so we talk away till we reach his place, and he asks me in, which I decline, however, and peg on. Although tramping alone, one is never lonely, but finds some one to talk to every day, both at the inns and on the road. Indeed, one is better off when alone than when touring with a friend, as in the latter case people hesitate to speak lest they should intrude. As for lifts on the road, these are only proffered to those walking alone. One's powers of observation when unaccompanied, too, are much more alert, as I have often found.

I pass through the village of Pickwick, and am making for Bath on a fine road, with old-fashioned houses, gardens, and inns, all so quaint and charming. At Bath I am again fortunate in getting first-rate quarters, where the food and

rooms are perfect. It is quite a big city, and the busy streets and shops remind one of London. The abbey is beautiful, but the architecture and fine east window are greatly obscured by immense gas pendants which are hanging everywhere, quite spoiling the artistic appearance of everything. Here is a fine park, with unusually rare trees, which are carefully named and dated. I make a sketch of an evergreen oak, which one does not often come across. There are stately elms, too, which of themselves are worth a visit. To me there are few natural beauties of greater interest than fine trees, and their dignity in old age seems to command respect as well as admiration; for we begin to think of all the changes which have occurred during their lifetime, and of the storms of winters and the heat of summers which have tried them for centuries. The mind runs into the history of one's country, of the rise and fall of men and sovereign powers, which these mute, inanimate giants have witnessed; and thus veneration and esteem go out to them. After trees come old houses, such as I saw at Tewkesbury, and, of course, old churches. They all have a tale to tell, and, though silent, yet speak.

The Roman Baths are truly interesting, and afford much to reflect upon as one wanders through chamber after chamber. The mind is impelled to something of reverence towards those

early pioneers of civilization, the Romans. Above these fine old baths are built modern rooms and corridors, together with a fine concert-room. Herein a good orchestral band is playing.

I am struck by the large number of public-houses and the host of disreputable-looking loungers in Bath.

On leaving Bath I take the "tram" out of the noisy streets as far as Comb Down, from whence is obtainable a grand view of the city, the abbey showing up beautifully over its surroundings.

At breakfast this morning I talk to a man who used to walk when he was young, and he grows quite enthusiastic when I tell him my plans. Now he is fat, and never walks when he can ride.

At Radstock I get some bread and cheese and cider in a dingy public-house, such as you would only find in a colliery district, which this is, but the cottages are more cheerful than the majority of miners' houses in the North. Here they have gardens, which are mostly well tilled, and give an air of comfort and cheerfulness to the place. Moreover, the cottages have chalet roofs, which is an improvement colliery houses in Yorkshire do not possess. Surely the colliers of the future will not long be contented with the usual monotonous rows of dingy brick cottages which in every mining district are little less dismal-looking than

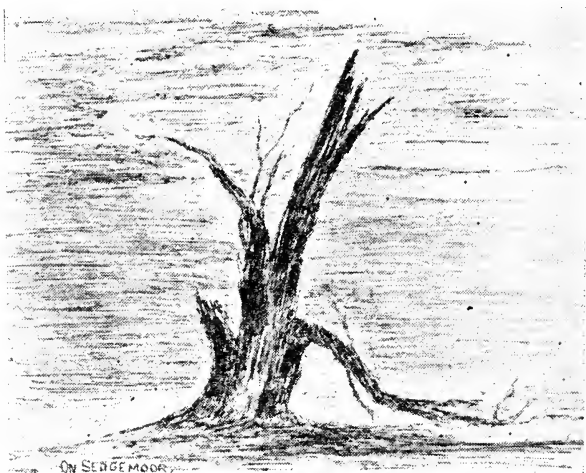
the pit chambers in which they toil to earn a livelihood.

A movement is afoot which is likely to gain ground as time goes on, and that is to make the working classes more sober and self-respecting by improving their surroundings, particularly their dwellings. I know of no more praiseworthy undertaking, nor one which will do more eventually to make a finer and a cleaner community. The time has gone by when any kind of hovel was considered good enough for workmen's dwellings. This was always a short-sighted policy, but now in the congestion of big towns and mining villages it is antagonistic to the best interests, not only of the workers themselves, but of the community at large. On economic grounds alone it pays better for the labouring population to be well housed, well fed, and well clothed.

I pass the famous Radstock Elm by the roadside, and make a sketch. In doing so an old farm labourer comes up and tells me the Vicar told them all about the old tree the other night in the schoolroom, and that it was two hundred and sixty years old. I remark that it must surely be more than that, but he wouldn't have it, and says it was planted at that time to commemorate a great battle near here.

After sketching the tree I tramp away, and meeting a man in a cottage garden, ask him if

he knew anything about the old elm. Ay, that he did. It was nine hundred years old, and had been planted to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo, which was fought close by! Only the other day some bones of the slain had been found whilst trenching in the meadows! Of course I take all this seriously, and ask him if the Battle of



ON SEDGEMOOR.

Waterloo had really been fought there, and he assures me that was so.

I tramp away, wondering what next. I meet a parson on horseback a few miles further on, and we have a good laugh over the Radstock elm, which he considers to be about five hundred years old. Thus, in this matter as in most things, if

we take the highest and lowest estimates and strike an average we can often arrive at an approximate figure. I have done this when asking about distances, and with very close results. The parson tells me that the scenery between here and Wells is the finest in Somerset, and he is right.

A poor inn is my lot at the cathedral city of Wells. The place is just changing hands, owing to its being acquired by a brewery from the executors of the late owner and landlord, who has recently died. It is evidently to be run on new lines, judging from the class of women acting as barmaids, general entertainers, and so forth. However, they do their best to make me comfortable. The piano is going the whole evening, and humorous songs—not of the highest order—are enthusiastically encored by the audience. My bedroom I approach through the most intricate labyrinth of narrow passages at different levels, for the old place has been built at various periods during the past three hundred years. As I take my candle and grope my way to bed I imagine what a panic there would be if the old inn took fire. My thoughts are not eased when, just as I am dropping to sleep, I hear a man coming stumbling along, falling heavily on the steps. His candle dances down the stairs, after which profound quiet reigns. Being very tired, I

drop off to sleep, leaving the man asleep on the stairs, as I afterwards learned.

V. WELLS: GLASTONBURY.

Wells is most interesting, the cathedral and the palace being particularly so, and there is a quaint old world air about the whole place which suggests repose. It is worth coming a long way to see this beautiful cathedral, which is equally splendid inside and out. I notice three inverted arches constructed to prevent the original arches giving way. All is very grand, orderly, and clean, and the stained glass is very beautiful. So, too, are the sculptures of the kings of England, standing in niches with carved canopies. There is a glorious open space of green sward outside the cathedral, perhaps three acres in extent, and this shows off the structure to advantage.

A fine archway leads into the Market-place and to the Bishop's Palace, round which is a moat with its drawbridge, and great ivy-covered walls, all full of dignity and repose. There is a noble row of elms where I stand, and as the musical bells ring out a pretty hymn tune this quiet Sunday morning I make a little sketch. As eleven o'clock approaches the bells burst forth in louder tones and then subside for service. I creep in quietly to enjoy the beautiful Litany which this morning is being said or chanted over such a vast

proportion of the Protestant portion of the Empire presided over by our Sovereign Lord and King Edward. The familiar prayers which I have heard and repeated all my life constitute a never-failing bond of peace wherever you roam. And the grand organ resounds through the high vault, all so rapturous, impressive, and inspiring.

After church I march away leisurely for Glastonbury, and on the way notice a fine breed of sheep of cream-coloured fleece, such as Sidney Cooper delighted to paint, but which to me has the appearance of being carefully scoured and washed as if for show. I am now walking over Sedgemoor, where Monmouth was overthrown more than two centuries ago. There is a weird, wild tone about the district.

"The George" at Glastonbury, reached in the afternoon, is one of the best inns in England. It was called the "Pilgrims' Inn," and was built by the Abbot of Glastonbury four centuries ago. The inn was at one time connected with the Monastery by a passage under the road or street. The cellars are of dungeon-like appearance, and here is a spring of water with a stone seat for penitents, who sat with their legs immersed in the trough. The Abbot paid all the expenses of the inn, and every visitor was treated as a guest and allowed to remain for two days. The relics of Glastonbury attracted a great number of pilgrims

to the shrines. At first they found accommodation in the abbey, then a hospitium was erected, and when this was insufficient they were lodged in the "Pilgrims' Inn."

The Abbot of Glastonbury was known to entertain as many as five hundred guests at a time, and he issued his own coinage.

St. Patrick was the first Abbot of Glastonbury till he died A.D. 472, aged 111. His bones remained in the abbey till 1184, when it was destroyed by fire, and rebuilt at once. The abbey grounds are surrounded by a high wall and cover sixty acres. In the kitchen are four fireplaces, each large enough to roast an ox. The abbey was dissolved in 1539, and a very fine clock which I saw and admired was taken therefrom to Wells Cathedral. The dial is six feet in diameter, and is marked to twenty-four hours, the phases of the moon being shown. Above the dial is a pannelled tower, around which knights on horseback revolve in opposite directions every hour on the striking of the clock. A figure is seated and strikes bells every quarter of an hour with a hammer, whilst outside on a buttress of the transept two figures in armour strike the hours with their battle-axes. The clock was made in 1322 by Peter Lightfoot, a monk, and is the oldest known self-striking clock extant. The famous Strasburg clock is dated 1571.

The famous Glastonbury Thorn, according to popular tradition, sprang from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea when he built the church here and preached Christianity. It blossomed on Christmas Day, and pilgrimages were frequent during the Middle Ages. It is probably an early flowering variety of the hawthorn. Instances are known of this variety bearing flowers in December.

The last abbot, Richard Whiting, was beheaded and quartered on Torre Hill, close by, in 1539, by order of Henry VIII., Defender of the Faith, who sold the lands and seized the treasures.

I am sorry to leave my comfortable quarters at the "Pilgrims' Inn," the very best I ever stayed at; but I must get on to Bridgwater, and so, after an excellent breakfast, with coffee as good as the French make, I am off before nine o'clock. To-day is a short day of fifteen miles, such as one must take now and then for the tour to be pleasant and easy.

I pass through a species of forest, or common land, with rows of oaks between the hedges, and the whole is as pretty as it is silent. I walk for miles without meeting a soul. The oaks are covered with mosses and ferns growing on their trunks and branches.

Down comes the rain, and I don my Burberry "slip-on." These light rain-proof coats are indispensable for a walking tour; they weigh two

and a half pounds only, and can easily be stowed away in one's knapsack. To-day I got a thorough wetting, but a hot bath and a change put me all right in half an hour.

VI. MINEHEAD: LYNTON: ILFRACOMBE.

I am off early for Minehead, and on the way fall in with a sportsman who informs me that in this district he had seen them hunt and kill the red and the fallow deer, the fox, the hare, and the otter, which he thought was an unusual combination not to be found in any other district in England.

The Somerset and Devonshire lanes are not without their disadvantages, as I found when down here some time ago. The hedges and banks are so high that you often cannot see the surrounding country. When full of wild flowers they are pretty, but often very hot and oppressive.

I am amused at a commercial traveller this morning who couldn't face his breakfast, and there was some of the finest home-cured ham I ever tasted, together with excellent coffee. He grumbled at being charged six shillings for his high tea last night, his bed, and breakfast; and yet he admitted having drunk seven whiskies and sodas, which left him with a big head and no appetite this morning.

At Minehead I am again fortunate in my choice of an inn, for I get to a famous old hunting-house, well known for its good things all round. People stay at Minehead also for the mild winter climate. It is a seaside place, and the shingly beach with its coloured mosses is a pretty sight. There are no sands to speak of. There is a meet of stag-hounds at Cloutsham, near here, and as I start



WEIRD EXMOOR.

out this morning I see many of the hunting folk going to the meet.

It is a very pleasing winding road down into Porlock, with distinctly a fine view of the Atlantic Ocean in front. Pretty cottages are met with at every turn. It is a lovely combination of country and seaside. Up out of Porlock is the steepest road I ever walked, the gradient being

one in five. The view from the top is magnificent, and I hear the cry of hounds in the distance, and a couple of them cross the road and dash away back into the gorse and heather. The altitude is fourteen hundred feet and the air is deliciously pure and invigorating, the view of the Welsh coast being beautiful. Such a sight of moorland, sea, and lovely sky I have rarely seen before, with the sun shining over all, and a crisp, cool breeze making this the most enchanting walk one could take. I notice some little rough, brown Exmoor ponies as I walk along this high coast road quite close to the sea.

I reach Lynmouth, and then after a stiff climb get to my cosy cottage hotel at Lynton, all so neat and clean and hospitable.

Next day I walk through the Valley of Rocks, all very romantic and pretty. This is one of the finest districts I ever walked through. Another steep descent brings me into Combe Martin. I obtain some excellent cider here for lunch, which puts me in good form till Ilfracombe is reached. To-day is warm, and I feel my sack rather heavy; therefore, I lightened it a little by reducing its contents. On the other hand, nothing is more conducive to comfort when you reach your quarters for the night than having a sufficiency of underclothing for a complete change. The small satchel which serves some tourists is

nothing in my way. I prefer to carry more and have the increased comfort.

My inn at Ilfracombe, or rather hotel, to give it its proper title, does not impress me favourably; but one cannot expect to be in good luck every day.

I am off betimes, through Barnstaple and Bideford, most of it ordinary country of little interest. The roads are the worst I ever trudged. On my right is Appledore across the water, whilst Bideford is a fine, clean town, with a long bridge spanning an arm of the sea, with quay and ships showing evidences of activity. Talking to an old sea-dog at the inn, he tells me Clovelly is his native place, where all the inhabitants are related, so great was the custom of intermarriage. He had not conformed to this custom himself, for he got his wife from Liverpool.

VII. CLOVELLY: NEW QUAY: PENZANCE: LAND'S END.

Down a steep incline, passing pretty thatched cottages, I come to Clovelly. It has but one street, which is so steep that it is perforce composed of steps. I put up at the one and only inn, where I am comfortable. The various rooms of the inn are filled with black oak furniture, and the walls literally covered from floor to

ceiling with pieces of china of all kinds—plates, dishes, teapots, and what not. A lady staying in the house tells me in a tone of strict confidence that she bought several pieces of Jacobean furniture at a ridiculously low figure, the landlady not knowing the value of them!

My next day from Clovelly is through moor-



NEAR CLOVELLY.

land gorse and heather on to Stretton, with Lundy Island lying out to my right. I get to the inn at Stretton very wet, but a change and a comfortable supper puts me right once more. All is quiet and restful in the little parlour with its bright fire, when four "cockneys" burst in upon the scene and everything is in commotion. A more

ill-mannered crew I never met in all my travels. I am glad to get off to bed out of their company. The old landlady in giving me my candle apologizes for their unmannerly behaviour, saying it was a long time since she remembered having such an ill-bred lot of men in her house.

Next day is Sunday, and I get my breakfast and am off before the gentry from London make their appearance.

There is a charm of repose in walking through our country districts which you don't get abroad. I am afraid it is fast disappearing here owing to the great number of motor cars which are found upon all our roads—main roads and otherwise. The pedestrian must now avoid even the bye-roads if he wishes to enjoy his walk. Foot-paths must be sought out, which is not difficult for short journeys, but for long tours of hundreds of miles you are bound to use the roads and to suffer annoyance from dust or mud. The dust nuisance is of course the greater, and seems likely to be a continual pest to all users of the roads—save motorists.

A dreary-looking place has to serve me this Sunday evening at Camelford, famous in the time of King Arthur and Mordred in the sixth century, and now a decayed town. On the cliffs near Camelford is the famous Castle of Tintagel. I sit with the landlord and his wife, as there is no fire

in the parlour; and I would rather be with them in a warm, comfortable kitchen than alone in a damp, cold parlour. The landlord tells me I have passed the highest inhabited house in the country on my walk to-day—1300 feet above sea-level. He also informs me that farming pays well hereabouts, and that trade generally is looking up. We are now in Cornwall, where I learn that many tin mines have been re-opened in the district which have been closed for years.

Next morning I am off for New Quay by way of Wadebridge, where there are Druidical remains consisting of nine stones called the "Nine Maidens." The legend goes that these maidens were turned into stone for dancing on the Sabbath.

A man driving a smart pony and trap invites me to get in, and he tells me he once kept the inn at Camelford, which he assured me had sadly degenerated since then. His early days were spent in Australia, where he saved a thousand pounds. He then returned to England, got married, and put his money into bad hands and lost it. He went back to Australia with his wife, made money, and returned home and took the inn, where they did well and brought up four children. Two sons are buyers for large London merchants; one has a thousand pounds a year salary, the other six hundred pounds per annum. All this he owed to his active, thrifty wife, he said.

New Quay is pretty, and is not yet overbuilt. The cliffs are rocky and very picturesque, and the beach is formed of several coves or bays with fantastic rocks all about them, altogether a very pretty sight. But of all the inns I ever stayed at this one was the poorest; everything was unsatisfactory—the beds, the cooking, and the lack of cleanliness all round. There was no redeeming



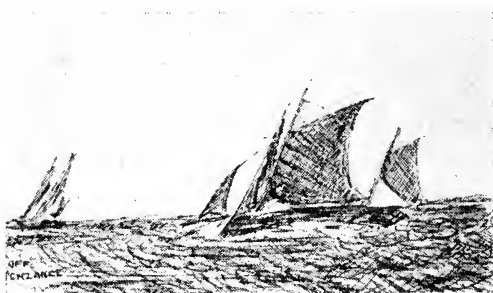
CORNISH COTTAGE.

feature except the bearing of the young woman who waited on me. I never saw good manners serve in place of so many deficiencies.

It seems to me that none of the inns I stay at in Cornwall can be remarkable for their cleanliness. It may be the damp, enervating climate which makes the people careless, as it does in Ireland. This was the explanation I got in Ireland

when I remarked about the lazy, indifferent habits of the people, and perhaps there may be something in it.

At New Lynn I meet the Vicar passing through the village. He invites me to look at his church, which contains some fine old woodwork and is altogether most interesting. The old oak pews are finely carved, and are said to be five hundred years old. There is a large coat-of-arms hung in the chancel, which was presented by Charles II. in



OFF PENZANCE

recognition of shelter being given to Charles I. by the lord of the manor when Cromwell's men were in pursuit of the king. Charles I. sojourned in Cornwall and got shelter and protection in several houses during his disturbed times. Each one who so protected the King received the royal arms in this form, to be hung up in the parish church as a souvenir of loyalty and devotion.

Crossing a dreary moor, I stay to get some

tea at the dirtiest cottage I ever put my head in, served by the most slovenly, dirty woman I ever saw. Hungry and tired as I am I cannot face food under such conditions, so I peg on and get to Redruth, where things are cleaner and more appetizing, and where I put up for the night.

A solid nine hours sleep put me in good form



THE LAST HOUSE, LAND'S END.

for my last big day's walk. All along to Penzance the country is partly mining, and consequently not very romantic. My tramp was thus done in quicker time than usual, but I reach my inn quite fresh and in excellent spirits, for another ten miles will bring me to my "ultima thule."

As I had stayed at the inn at Land's End on a previous occasion, I start out betimes and walk out and back to Penzance the same day, signing the visitors' book at the "last inn."

The next day, in spite of the very rough passage, I take the boat across to the Scilly Islands, which are well worth seeing.

My journey is at an end, and I finish in as good form as when I left home.

I have not taken the nearest cut, but chose the route I considered most interesting, and which from Harrogate measures about five hundred miles. Needless to say, I saw five times as much of the country and everything going on around on foot as I could on wheels. Of course, it is more difficult to accomplish the journey on foot than to "bike" it, and it requires more determination and steady purpose. You cannot hurry the tour on foot as you may easily do, and, indeed, are apt to do, when cycling; for, given good roads, you have difficulty in going steadily along and seeing all there is to be seen. Then again, on a bike trip you don't so easily get into touch with the people, and this is its chief drawback, for it is not merely scenery which one goes out to see but the people. You want to talk to them, to learn something from them every day, and to do this to the best advantage you must go on foot, and alone.

From Harrogate to John o' Groats

(1909).

1. BURNSALL: HAWES: KIRBY STEPHEN.

HAVING walked from Harrogate to Land's End, I feel I should like to walk to John o' Groats, and thus make myself acquainted with the length, if not the breadth of the land.

I decide to take the route through the Yorkshire dales, and so I start on Thursday, June 3rd, 1909, at seven o'clock in the morning. It is a bright, cool morning, and I am in excellent form, for I have lately done more walking than usual. The otter hunting season is on, and for some weeks I have done my twenty or thirty miles a day on foot, nearer thirty than twenty. My knapsack weighs fourteen and a half pounds, but this includes lunch and some fruit, which I know will be appreciated later in the day. In touring it is well to have an eye to the future in all catering, and never be without a biscuit and some fruit in your sack, which are sure to refresh you and make your journey all the pleasanter, as

you can eat them whenever you want, and food eaten in that way in the open air is always most delicious and beneficial. Half the pleasure of a tour depends on having a sufficiency of food exactly suitable to your wants, and not too much. Drink only at meals—the less alcohol the better. On this tour I am taking none at all, although I carry a small flask of brandy in case of sickness.

My grey whipcord suit, buttoned up to the throat, made by a military tailor, allows me to dispense with the use of collars and ties. In hot weather the waistcoat can be cast off without sacrifice of appearance, and the whole is 'neat. Breeches, puttees, and heavy shooting boots, and tweed deerstalker hat, complete the kit, which experience has proved is the most suitable for all weathers, and for general neatness and respectable appearance. The only drawback is its military look. On the continent this is not remarked. But the advantages greatly outweigh this disadvantage.

Turner travelled on foot through France carrying his knapsack, and did some of his finest work in this way. It would probably induce romance and artistic feeling in the great artist, such as could not be incited in any other way. I can quite believe it would, and so can anyone who has travelled much in this way. If you have any artistic feeling in you it will bring it out, and so

with romance; it is all developed in a tour afoot, and especially in a foreign country,—in old world cities, anywhere indeed where the people, manners, customs, scenery, and atmosphere are different from one's ordinary surroundings.

Ruskin also did much on foot through lovely France and Italy. How beautifully he describes his impressions. A great word-painter, as great in his way as Turner was in painting pictures.



BOLTON ABBEY.

I was once sketching at Bolton Abbey in the company of one of our ablest artists. The subject before us was so vast that I found it impossible to begin. My friend observed with a smile that it appeared to "bother" me. I suggested that perhaps I had better try and describe in writing what I saw. My companion said if I could do so it

would be quite as artistic an accomplishment as if I painted a picture of what I saw. "Your word picture may reach the press, and the press lives for ever," he said.

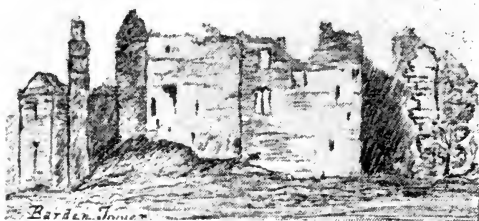
I am afraid I found description equally difficult, and wished Ruskin were there to help me. However, we must do our modest best, take plenty of time, and avoid any disposition to hurry. There is no mode of travel which lends itself like walking does to the exercise of body and mind, and which brings into practice your powers of observation to their fullest extent. Nothing escapes you, and when you are in fine condition and can stride along easily at not more than three and a half miles an hour, with as much ease as sitting in an armchair, your mind is free to receive all impressions which present themselves from within or without.

The greensward runs along my road, as it does along most of our highways. It is delightful to walk upon and pleasing to the eye; often carpet-like and makes luxuriant tramping. It is always pleasanter than the hard road, save when you are very tired at the end of a long day; then a hard even surface will allow you to drag your feet along lazily.

At Blubberhouses curlews and plovers are on the cry everywhere; their notes so plaintive and weird. Larks singing, sheep bleating; all pastoral

tones which are full of restfulness and joy this lovely morning. Talking to an old roadman, he tells me he has worked hard at a "low-cut" all his life, but he is quite satisfied and happy. "We cannot all have t' best jobs," he says with a smile of contentment.

At Beamsley Moor all is quiet save the rushing of the Kex Beck. Here I eat my modest lunch and listen to the singing of the brook, which induces a restful siesta. How pleasant are such

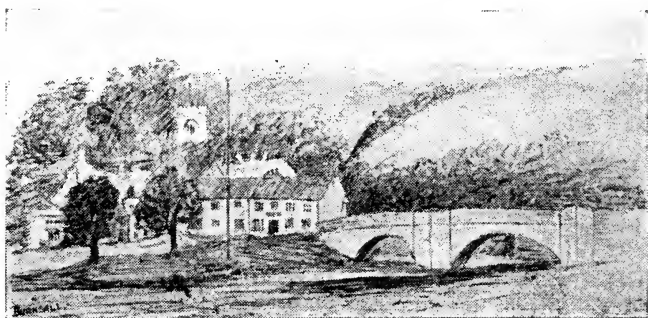


BARDIN TOWER, WHARFEDALE.

day-dreams as you rest on the moorland after a long walk, all your senses being perfectly attuned! This feeling can only be experienced by a life of activity in the open air.

Then on to Bolton Woods, which are always charming, and particularly so to-day as I tramp through leisurely. Resting in sight of dear old Burnsall with its quaint broad bridge spanning

the quick flowing shallow Wharfe I think of my first walk here thirty years ago when I stayed at the "Red Lion." So I resolve to rest there to-night. The village is much the same as it was then—one or two new houses. The old landlord of the inn is dead and gone. A man with a German name has it, but they make me very comfortable, in spite of the interior extensions which are not improvements on the old



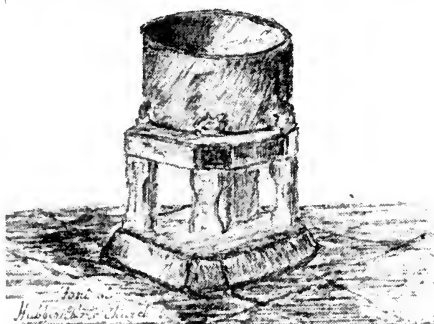
BURNSALL, WHARFEDALE.

cosy parlours where we used to sit in the evening and tell of the famous fish which had been caught. Old Jerry Emmett was then the great man in the district. He showed me how to catch my first trout. Since then I have made no improvement; fishing has not claimed me for a votary. Jerry died only the other day at over eighty years of age. He will be missed by many

in the district who profited by his angling experience.

In the evening I stroll out to the bridge. There is a lovely sunset, which throws a peculiarly pretty light over this beautiful village. But it is the quiet, the absolute restfulness of everything which strikes one as being the great charm here.

Near the church a caravan is encamped and sending up its streak of blue smoke into the still air. I stroll on and the owner kindly shows me the interior. Two narrow couches run down the length of the van which



FONT IN HUBBERHOLME CHURCH, WHARFEDALE.

make two beds. Resting on one of these is a pretty gipsy-like young woman wearing an artistic kind of hood which shows off her features to advantage. At once you think of fortune-telling as you glance at those large black brown eyes and hair, regular teeth, and the robust complexion of rosy cheeks bronzed by the open air life she has

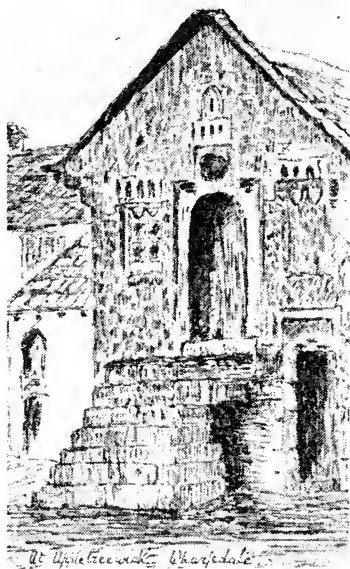
led. But no, I am simply asked to write my name in her visitors' book, after being shown all the recesses of this wonderful little caravan. The night is nippy, and the fire burns cosily in the polished brass stove, and the whole interior suggests comfort and simplicity, the ideal, simple life. They carry a tent, which can be used for sleeping or other accommodation. Of course they cook their own food, getting milk, vegetables, etc., on the way. Occasionally they put up at an inn for a change. This was their fifth year's caravanning, and was as much appreciated as their first. Their travelling averaged twenty miles a day for a month or two during the summer, and occasionally they remained a month or two at the seaside, when tents were fixed in order to accommodate friends.

Next day I am up at seven and out before breakfast. How altered is the scene of last night. The sun's rays are now thrown upon it at a different angle and from another direction. There, too, is less warmth. It is a matter of light; everything we see depends upon the light in and from which we see it. The sky last night was warm pink and gold: it is now skim-milk hued. There is a little haze over the trees and on the hill backing the view, but just now the sun blazes forth and the whole little scene is lit up. The village is quiet; hardly a sound,

and yet it is eight o'clock. The cuckoo still sings over on the fell, and I can just see the caravan nestling among the trees. But breakfast is ready. How good the coffee, ham, and eggs—quite as good as ever, better coffee than they made in the old days. We have learned much from the French during the past thirty years, and coffee-making is not the least important article. English cooking all round has wonderfully improved during that time; but in our country districts the French are still generations in advance of us in the culinary department, and I am afraid always will be. They are more adept and painstaking. The English country innkeeper prefers to cater for drinkers; it is more remunerative and less troublesome!

I shoulder my knapsack and get down by the riverside to chat with a stout old gentleman whom I met at the inn. He has caught a pound-and-a-half grayling, and is fishing away happily with maggot. He advises me to take the riverside to Kettlewell and Buckden and stay there. I have another look at the caravan party, and bid them good morning as the lady takes a snapshot of me. They are going my way, but have to keep the road whilst I take the riverside. I meet the Burnsall poet, old Bland, and remind him of our meeting thirty years ago. This he remembers, and he soon breaks into verse, which is quite enchanting

in this lovely little spot this morning. A fine old fellow over eighty, with long white hair and beard, he is quite of patriarchal appearance. All is peaceful and full of loveliness. People talk about having no friends to tramp with as being a drawback.



AT APPLETREEWICK, WHARFEDALE.

Why, I am full of friends. The caravan lady says she knows I shall have an enjoyable tour as I am by myself, and, as I have said, the enjoyment of a tour rests entirely with one's self. One must be determined to be pleased with everything and everybody and never make comparisons. I tell her I consider this good philosophy.

I move off leisurely up the beautiful greensward skirting the singing river. It is most picturesque all along here. Nothing could be finer or more restful. I get some dale cheese and fresh butter at Kilnsey and peg on. Here is the famous Kilnsey Crag with

the little crystal stream running along the roadside. In order to realize the immensity of this rock one must stand and contemplate it.

I reach the "White Hart" at Hawes just as rain begins to fall.

Hawes is a quiet market town, principally for sheep and cattle. It stands at an altitude of 800 feet, and is said to be the highest market town in England. Hardraw Waterfall is near here, but I have seen it frequently, so I just potter about the little town after dinner, and my new acquaintance shows me the road I shall take to-morrow, over the Buttertubs Pass to Kirkby Stephen.

Next morning I am off at half-past eight, in thin rain, which is, however, pleasant, as I make my way gaily over loose and stony roads, only fit for the walker. Up I climb for Muker, and get a magnificent view of Hawes.

The Buttertubs are several deep holes in the limestone. Some have basaltic pillars with ferns and mosses growing down their sides. The solitude and wildness of this district is unsurpassed by any spot I have ever visited. There is a dreary wilderness aspect about it, and now that the rain falls heavily, it is anything but cheering. It is only summer rain, however, and ceases from time to time. I pass several pretty waterfalls on my right, and the lovely emerald grass and trees as I reach the Ure valley afford a rare sight.

The road is very rough and steep, quite impracticable for bike or motor, and very difficult for carriage traffic. All is very quiet and wild; little rushing streams on all sides. I am not sorry when Kirkby Stephen is reached, as I am quite wet through, but my welcome at the "King's Arms," and some tea after I have changed my kit, put me on good terms with everything and everybody. The landlord is an ex-soldier, and had lived with his wife in Malta, Cyprus, and other places abroad. My clothes are dried, folded, and brought to me before I go to bed, and my puttees are properly rolled up, as military men know how they should be.

An old gentleman, who does his twenty miles of cycling daily at seventy-five, is staying at the inn for rest and quiet, but he cannot walk. I am reminded of an old fellow I met some time ago hunting on foot at Green Hammerton. He had walked out from York, eleven miles, and as the hounds went home in the afternoon he was walking back, another ten miles, at eighty-five! I asked how he kept in such good form. "By avoiding drink and having a mind of my own," he said. Decision he meant—and away he trudged home that winter's afternoon, bitterly cold and raw as it was. A fine sparely-built, rosy-cheeked old man, clean shaven, with a grand head of silvery hair. I did admire him. Honesty, decision of

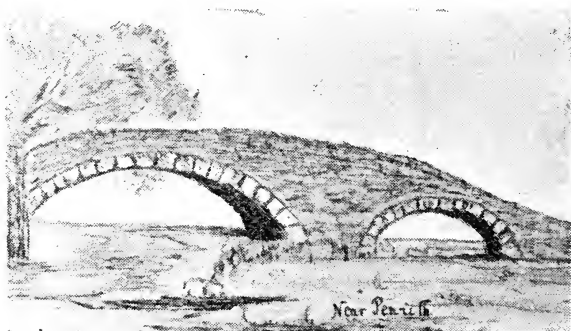
character, and a clean mind were stamped all over him. He never lost an opportunity of being in the open air in all weathers all his life, he said. And he looked it—a good man, one of Nature's gentlemen.

On Sunday morning I shoulder my knapsack, and at a quarter to nine I am off. I feel better satisfied to be afoot than resting here in this somewhat desolate place. The country around is a succession of purple hills—very lovely. The chief landowners are Lord Lonsdale, the Musgraves, and the Thompsons. A man tells me that the railway reaches a height of two thousand feet near here. We are certainly in high altitudes all along. The approach to Appleby is splendid; the church in the foreground and the castle behind make a dignified and inspiring scene.

Appleby is quaint and pretty, with the river Eden running through it; many of the houses being whitewashed look neat and bright. A motor-cyclist stops astride his machine to ask me the way. He has hardly time to dismount, having 140 miles to ride to-day. Whatever can he see of the country? Nothing, he admits, but he likes the rapid motion through the air.

II. TEMPLE SOWERBY: CARLISLE: TEVIOTDALE.

Nearing Temple Sowerby some children are at play. A girl runs after a boy who is too quick for her as he scampers along the road. I hold out my hand and she takes it, and we rush after the boy. How much akin we are, I think, as we scamper along the road joyously. The scenery is fine, and the light and shade on the mound-like hills give a pretty effect.



I stay at Temple Sowerby for tea at the inn. A pretty village of red sandstone, with cottages, green, church, and inn. They give me an excellent afternoon tea in a cosy parlour, where two fishermen are seated reading. They tell me they are going out this evening to fish. It is too clear in the daytime, and the water is low at present.

If I like to join them this evening they will find me a rod, so I decide to stay, as the landlady says she can give me a room, cosy and old-fashioned, which she shows me at once.

Next day is beautifully clear and cool, an ideal walking day. Across the village green, opposite the inn, are some benches under the trees. Here sits the village parliament. The Green is extensive, covering several acres, and is broken up or divided by the church and the inn, with numerous chestnut and other trees. I am writing in the sun, in front of the inn, just before breakfast. They are bustling about inside, and the smell of coffee and frying ham tells me that an important event is near. The night fishermen supply us with a dish of fine trout, which is a good prelude to the ham and eggs. We are a jolly company, and I don't get away till ten o'clock, my friends seeing me off, after weighing my sack in their hands. They were a right merry lot of fellows.

I took tea at a dreary-looking little inn. There is nothing better than tea in the afternoon to walk on. Indeed, it hardly ever comes amiss; it is always refreshing, hot weather or cold. Again and again I have been absolutely tired out, and as I thought, incapable of walking another mile. Tea, bread, and butter have put me right in twenty minutes and fitted me for another ten miles. So it it does to-day, and I stride away

till I reach my inn at Carlisle, where they treat me liberally and of the best.

A commercial traveller, a Highlander, proves good company this evening. He talks about the unpopularity which any form of compulsory military service would meet with in the High-

lands, from whence many of our best soldiers come.

In the evening a Scotch lassie sings Scotch songs outside the hotel in a good, strong soprano voice. The gay, vigorous laughter of the young folk in the street is quite refreshing.



TEVIOTDALE.

I pass Netherby Hall, the seat of Sir Richard Graham, who was known, I believe, in the old days as the Black Douglas. The country here along the Esk makes excellent grazing land, and hereabouts one sees rhododendrons in bloom all along the roadside.

Scots Dyke was the debatable land in days of

old, where frequent encounters took place between English and Scots. The village of Canobie, with its waterfall, is pretty, and the broad, quick-flowing Esk sings merrily along its course as it winds through a succession of meadow and woodland. There is a fine old inn here, the "Cross Keys," its white-washed front shining through the green foliage, with great masses of hawthorn blossom and rhododendrons, and every variety of forest tree. Occasionally the river scenery reminds me of Bolton Abbey and the Wharfe.

At Langholm the river is polluted by the factories, and the lovely Esk loses its charm. The Duke of Buccleuch owns the land for a great distance around. I talk to an intelligent Scot, who informs me that His Grace can walk on his own land as far as Dalkeith, near Edinburgh, some seventy miles away. The people are all very kind in answering questions, and are, as a rule, fairly well-informed about their native country.

After tea this afternoon I again get away in surprising fashion. Every cottage is spick and span, and all farm buildings are in perfect order, excellently built and neatly whitewashed, indicating wealth and good management. I am now in Teviotdale, and the rushing stream keeps me company right away up to my inn, the "Moss-paul," which



MOSSPAUL, TEVIOTDALE.

I am glad to reach after a long, hard day. This was formerly an old coaching inn, but has been recently rebuilt, and is now a bungalow, or rather a semi-bungalow erection, fitted up with bath-room and other modern conveniences. There is no other inn for twelve miles on each side of this road between Langholm and Hawick—an out-of-the-way, moorland district, which some would consider dreary. The hills quite hem in the inn, shutting it in from any distant view. There are some good sepia drawings in the dining-room of places in the locality, painted by Tom Scott in a very strong, artistic manner, which I admire greatly. One of the landlord's daughters in the kitchen sings beautifully some old Scotch songs, which are both quaint and worth hearing. I learn that both daughters are fond of singing, but have no one to accompany them, although there is a pianoforte. I promise to do so after supper, and they are mightily pleased. What a pleasant hour we had going through the old Scotch ballads! Mary, the younger, an exceedingly pretty girl, has a fine, clear soprano voice, which would give extraordinary results with proper training. The landlord and his wife were delighted, and thanked me profusely as I went to bed, after a very active and long day.

Everything is clean and comfortable. As I lie in bed I can hear the rushing of the mountain

stream. All else is quiet, and I am soon wrapped in sound sleep.

Wednesday morning is brilliantly fine, and the air is crisp and cold. The lambs are bleating on the surrounding hillsides as I look out of my bedroom window. I get an excellent breakfast, the coffee being unusually good, and the fresh baked hot cakes very acceptable. To-day is an easy day, and so it is ten o'clock before I get away. Five miles off the watershed changes and goes towards Hawick. The whole of this district has been made famous by Sir Walter Scott. It is full of romance, and is worthy of it. I notice some particularly fine sheep, and stop to have a talk to the farmer who owns them—a robust, handsome man of sixty with long beard, and bronzed, with good features. He asks me into his cottage for a cup of tea, which I accept. A remarkable man, fond of reading and poetry, he recites Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon" whilst we are drinking our tea. He is delighted to hear that I had lately been in the Castle of Chillon. How he would travel if he could afford it, he said, with an eye full of enthusiasm. No fine house with servants and motor cars for him. He is highly religious in all his conversation, yet full of cheerfulness and laughter; a true, good-natured laugh. I have difficulty in getting away, and he asks me to call on my way back. He would take me out

among the shepherds in the most inaccessible and out-of-the-way parts, and we would have a week of it, debating, reciting, and singing, if I could put up with them in their humble way. I thank him heartily, saying I would try and come another time. His farm is heavily rented at twenty-three shillings an acre, and he tells me there are thousands of acres of good land belonging to the Duke of Buccleuch which only require labour to make them highly productive. Mine host was not a contentious man, and told me all this in an easy, confidential manner, and not in any spirit of ill-will towards his landlord. Further on I pass the famous Branksome Tower of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

My inn at Hawick is very ordinary, and I am not prepossessed by the town of hosiery and cloth-making.

At a quarter-past eight next morning I am jaunting away on my way to Melrose. A commercial traveller whom I met at the inn tells me there are hundreds of workpeople out of employment at Hawick, owing to the keen foreign competition, and that unless some form of Protection is resorted to our hosiery trade will be killed.

Further on I watch some sheep-shearing. The land in this district, right away to the hilltops, is well cultivated. It seems that if farming

like this could prevail throughout the country, the land would produce ten-fold what it now produces. If immense tracts of country, such as are possessed by the Duke of Buccleuch and others, could be released and sold to willing tillers of the soil, who are waiting for the opportunity of occupying under favourable circumstances—surely there could be none other than admirable results. This, I feel, is the cause of the great dissatisfaction which now exists on the land question. It will take much legislation to obtain a satisfactory solution of the matter, for manifestly present landowners will not submit to that which is unreasonable and inequitable. Concessions will have to be made on both sides before reasonable and lasting reform can be effected.

The country becomes romantic and pretty as I approach Selkirk. All along it has been agreeable, hilly pasture land, carrying many sheep, with here and there a ploughed field. Selkirk, lying in the Ettrick valley, made famous by Scott, who was at one time sheriff, is the cleanest little factory town I have ever seen.

III. ABBOTSFORD: PEEBLES: EDINBURGH.

A few miles beyond the town I get tea at a cosy little cottage, and then I walk on to Abbotsford and look over it for the second time, but not with the same enthusiasm as I had when I first visited it as a boy of nineteen. I was then full of the romance of Scott's works. They do not now appeal to me with the same force, but I enjoy going through the house and hearing things explained by a pleasant old man who has been many years in the service of the present owners, the Hope Scotts.

The glamour is spoilt when you view Abbotsford from the road to Melrose and get Galashiels in the picture, with its factory chimneys, gasometer, and other ugly features. The roads hereabouts are dusty with motor traffic, and the whole countryside is stripped of its freshness; enough to make the spirit of Sir Walter rise up against such desecration. I chat with the Melrose parson and he shows me a pleasant cut through the fields, down the Tweed-side. The walk into Melrose by the river is charming, and the wind is cool and refreshing as I saunter along, for I have plenty of time.

At my inn two jolly commercial travellers talk with me and evince great interest in my walk.



THE TWEED AT MELROSE.

One of them advises me to stay at Leith, at an old-fashioned inn frequented by artists and renowned for its fish suppers. If I decide to do so would I kindly show the landlady his card, which he gives me, and which shows that he is in the biscuit line—a very useful line too. So much for the pushing Scot, who is often far ahead of us as a commercial traveller. Subsequently, I find the inn will not suit me, so I decide to put up at a more modern hostelry of more central position in Edinburgh. This evening I take a turn round the lovely old Abbey of Melrose, so majestic and full of dignity and repose.

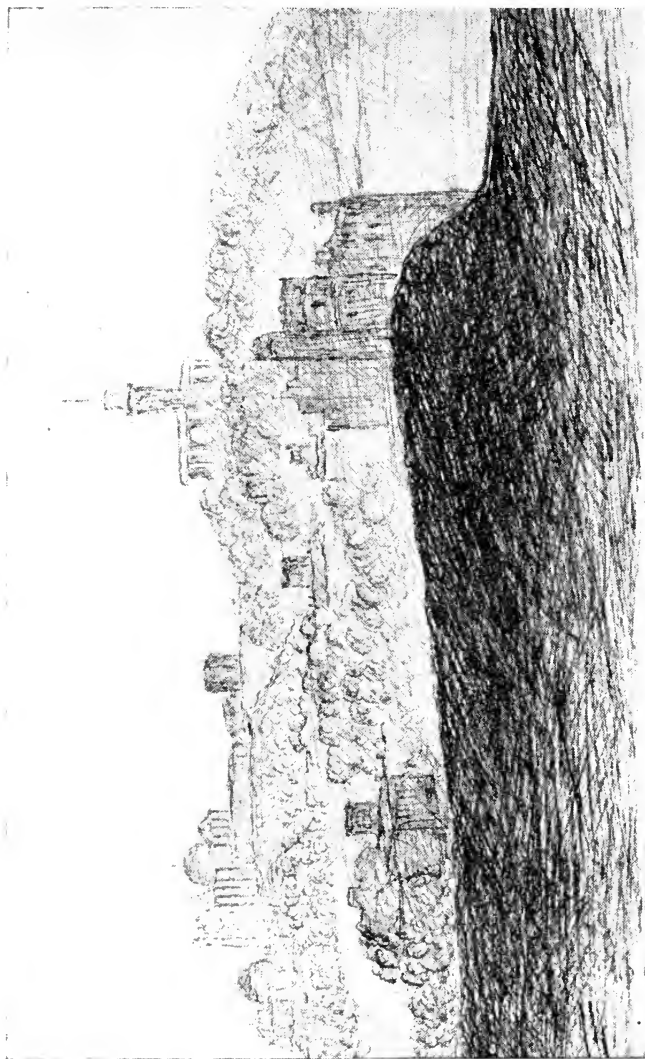
In speaking of Hawick I forgot to mention that the annual "Common Riding" was to take place the day after I left. It is an old, and at one time a necessary custom, of riding the marches, owing to the lack of fences and walls. A leader, or cornet, is chosen each year from the young unmarried men. Thomas Scott is cornet this year. The festival includes rides, processions, watching the sun rise, and many old customs, such as taking snuff, eating, drinking, dancing and games, and extends over many days.

Next morning as I start out down by the river-side for Galashiels a thin rain is falling, and it is delightfully fresh and cool. A few miles beyond the city of Scotch tweeds you pass extensive vineries, renowned for many years for the fine

quality of their grapes. The country hereabouts is well tilled, but is chiefly grazing land, with fir and larch plantations here and there.

I stay at the pretty village of Innerleithen for afternoon tea. From here you get a magnificent sight of woodland, where every shade of green blazes forth under the sun. The road runs through avenues of trees, and the whole scene is one of lovely greenery wherever the eye rests, save upon the quick-flowing Tweed wending its way through the landscape. My way goes by Traquair and on to Peebles, through very pretty hill country around St. Ronans, which has been immortalised by Scott. A lucky angler shows me a good basket of trout which he has just taken from the Tweed here. I march to Peebles, a pretty town, amidst high hills covered with trees, scrupulously clean and neat.

At the inn I spend the evening with an artist, who has travelled a great deal in Japan, which he considers the most artistic country extant. He tells me the Japanese possess no sense of honour, and their code of morality is quite different from that of Europeans. Under the old Japanese *régime* there was no poverty and no great individual wealth. Western civilization has altered all this. At present individuals are now growing wealthy, and there is much poverty which did not formerly exist. The Japanese make every possible sacrifice for their country: wealth, ease



EDINBURGH.

and comfort, honour, virtue—everything. In banks and positions of trust Chinese are employed in preference to Japanese. Their honesty can be better trusted. The Mikado is looked up to as the Father of his country, and revered to an extent quite unknown in other countries. He traces his descent back for 140 generations, and has documents to prove it.

I leave Peebles at eight in the morning on my road for Edinburgh. The day is again cool and bracing. On looking back one gets a pretty view of Peebles, surrounded by lovely blue, well-wooded hills, whilst the foreground is brilliant with green meadows. The land is in good state of cultivation, but is principally used for sheep-grazing. There are fine woods and larch plantations, and excellent roads run up the valley, level and of good surface. I am now 1000 feet up.

“Stop here for Old Tom and biscuit,” says the inn sign on the moors before reaching Penicuik. From Penicuik to Edinburgh the country is not interesting, so I jump on to a motor 'bus, which runs me into Auld Reekie.

I have visited Edinburgh three or four times, but to-day it appears less romantic as I enter on a hooting, evil-smelling motor bus, with dust flying in clouds everywhere. I wish I had walked in; but, as I have before mentioned, I have made no resolution to walk every inch of the road,

and I thought I would avoid uninteresting parts. The twentieth century quick traffic has certainly made this lovely city less cleanly and artistic.



EDINBURGH CASTLE.

During the evening I stroll down the old High Street and the Canongate, but there is hardly the same charm there used to be.

Crossing the North Bridge, the Calton Gaol looks fine and imposing, but a tall, red factory chimney hits one in the eye, as it were, and spoils the scene. Why did the people of Edinburgh allow such a monster to be erected?

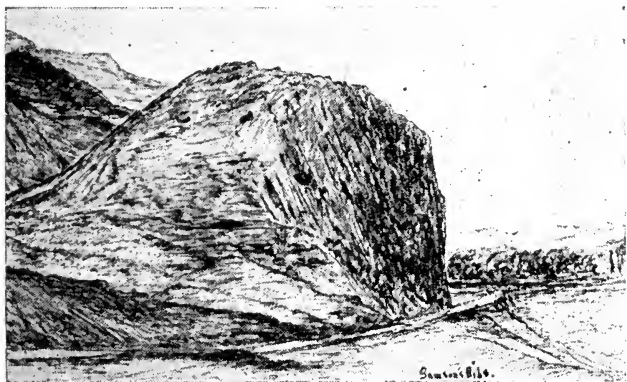
I walk down the Canongate to Holyrood. The women seem to be dirtier, more repulsive, and less artistic than formerly, or I have become more critical.

From the slopes of Arthur's Seat Holyrood seems to be robbed of much of its former grandeur. Perhaps the Saturday crowds help to accomplish this feeling. The ruin is pretty, the palace not so. Get round and view Holyrood from the other side, and you see it and the old town to advantage. Walk back to Princes Street, one of the finest streets in the world, and look across by the Scott monument southwards, and the view of the city is as charming as it is majestic.

The granite-paved streets make Edinburgh very noisy. After breakfast I sally forth for another visit to Old Edinburgh, down through the Grass Market and the Cowgate. What disreputable, villainous-looking people are found hanging about here this lovely Sunday morning! Drink and vice are stamped upon their faces. In France, Italy, and Spain you find such haunts as these, but not inhabited by such a vicious lot of people as one looks upon this morning.

They are a disgrace to Scotland and its lovely capital.

After pottering about I take the tram to Joppa. Salisbury Crags look magnificent in the afternoon sun. There is a good sea breeze at Joppa, and it is an agreeable change to sit and breathe it after a tramp of over two hundred miles. It is all most grateful and refreshing.



SAMSON'S RIBS, EDINBURGH.

I take another turn down to Holyrood. At Queensberry House there is a notice that porridge is distributed from eight to nine in the morning and soup from one to two in the afternoon. The ruined part of Holyrood is interesting, and so is the interior of the more modern portion.

On my way back from Holyrood I try to get in to St. Giles's Cathedral, but am told that only

seat-holders can be admitted, so I go back to my hotel.

Leaving on Monday morning, I take train across the Firth of Forth as far as Kinross, in order to avoid the colliery district. This course is recommended to me by a canny Scot, and I am glad I adopt it, and so avoid a part of the country which for a dozen miles or so is most uninteresting. Up to now I have had no railway assistance, and this will be the only train lift during the whole journey to John o' Groats. Passing Loch Leven I overtake many anglers with their fishing tackle. The loch is noted for its fine trout. It was in Loch Leven Castle that Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned in 1567, and where she signed an act of abdication in favour of her son, appointing Moray regent. She escaped the following year, and was afterwards captured and imprisoned, by Queen Elizabeth's orders, in Bolton Castle in Wensleydale, the seat of the Scropes.

On my way are beautiful rocks and woodlands. Crystal streams rush merrily along with charming music. In the open air one feels sensitive to every impression of natural beauty. Then, again, there is no hurry; one has abundance of time, and there is no attempt to reach a given place against time. This reminds me of what Robert Louis Stevenson says about walking:—

“To be properly enjoyed a walking tour should be gone upon alone. If you go in a company, or even in pairs, it is no longer a walking tour in anything but name. It is more in the nature of a pic-nic. Freedom is the essence; you should be able to stop and go on and follow this way or that as the freak takes you. You must have your own pace, you must be open to all impressions, and let your thoughts take colour from what you see. You should be as a pipe for any wind to play upon.”

IV. PERTH: DUNKELD: BLAIRGOWRIE.

The singing brook which I listen to as I write is a real pleasure, and puts me on good terms with everything around. Running water has always a peculiar charm for me. It is one of the pleasures of life out-of-doors, and one which you can only fully appreciate when on foot. You have thus abundance of time before you, and can sit and take it all in leisurely.

I now see what I missed when cycling through this lovely Glenfarg six years ago. I then skimmed over it quite regardless of its loveliness.

I stop at the “Bein Inn” for afternoon tea. There is a stream running in front of the house, and I sit by it whilst they are preparing tea. A piper is playing the bagpipes, and there is much

jollity inside. The extensive line of stabling reminds one of the coaching days now past and gone.

I am off again in the beautiful clear air. The high wooded hills nearly meet in this valley. The lovely blue sky makes them stand out in grand relief of vivid green, whilst right away up there pines stand out darkly against the sky. The "Baiglie Inn," which is on my road, is worked on the Gothenburg system, so goes the announcement; but how this is accomplished in this one solitary instance I cannot imagine.

All along the road hawthorn blossom is profusely massed, and the air is laden with its scent as I cross the Tay at the Bridge of Earn. A little farther on you look down upon the lovely old city of Perth, where I shall put up for the night. The silver Tay winds around it, and on every side is far-stretching woodland. The wooded hills and the crags add to the beauty of the foreground, whilst the distance is lost in the hazy afternoon sunshine.

I sit up here on a convenient bench and view this lovely scene leisurely with a sense of repose and satisfaction. Often have I looked down upon my resting place for the night as I now look down on fair Perth. There is a fine avenue of trees approaching Perth, and when the city is reached I conclude that it looks better at a distance than at close quarters.

I am always busy when alone in the evening at the inn, making notes or sketches, or looking at my maps and plans for the next day's tramp.

Next day I am off betimes and should like to see the old Palace of Scone, but I find that an order from Lord Mansfield is necessary, and so I leave it unseen.

There is moisture in the air, and the morning smell of the woods is extremely grateful. My sense of smell is very acute, and although often offended I am amply repaid by the rare impressions from the moorland air, the fresh earth, and the numerous exquisite odours of the country, which are particularly agreeable at early morn, when everything is freshest and at its best. Indeed, the sense of smell is capable of great cultivation, and constitutes in my case one of the pleasures of life.

Talking to a bluff and hearty farmer, he tells me the hay crop is good, but that they are troubled with the motor dust along the road, which spoils the quality of the hay. Two motors pass whilst we are talking, and, by the dust they throw up, illustrate his description in a very marked manner.

Four miles from Dunkeld is a stretch of desolate country which looks as if it would pay for cultivating. I get close to some young curlews, which is a rare thing to do, they are so sensitive.

Some people would call this a lonely locality. Fortunately I never feel lonely, no matter how out of the way or remote the place may be, and I have passed through districts at home and abroad which would try one's utmost endurance in that respect. To me there is always some charm or some little incident which saves the situation from being unattractive or lonesome. Loneliness is only felt in London or Paris, in the crowd of big cities, never in the country, where we have all Nature to commune with.

A pretty little rosy-cheeked girl stands in a wood close to the roadside and stares in wonder at me as I trudge along with my knapsack, the like of which she has probably never seen before. What a wonderfully pretty picture she makes in a background of perfect greenery showing up her white frock, fresh apple-red cheeks, brown eyes and hair. The little thing saw I admired her, and scampered off laughing.

To my right is Murthly Castle, where Millais used to stay and paint. Nothing could be finer than this lovely mountain and woodland scenery, where the air is so pure and sweet. Ferns, bracken, and rhododendrons deck the hill-sides right down to the roadway. Tall firs of every kind, the light and airy silver birches, and the flowering mountain-ash, make up a lovely woodland scene. They are cutting timber and have erected a steam

saw-mill, which breaks into the repose of these immense wooded hills. And the broad Tay flows languidly through far-reaching meadows, which are full of sheep grazing peacefully. This is Birnham. Another mile, and the Highlands begin at Dunkeld.

On the roadside I stand under the most gorgeous laburnum I ever saw. A hanging, golden mass, with the sunlight filtering through it, making a perfect fairy canopy. An old man gardening



THE TAY NEAR DUNKELD.

close by is quite disturbed at all this wood-cutting. The Duke wants money, he says, but it will spoil the appearance of the lovely countryside completely. Well might the old man complain to see such havoc. He has watched this growth for more than three-score years, and feels, perchance, to have a vested interest in it.

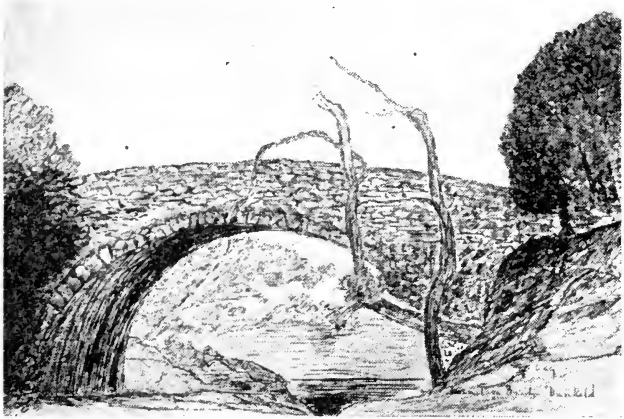
At Dunkeld I put up at one of the best inns I ever stayed at, and the village is one of the prettiest I have seen. The fine broad river and the majestic wooded hills, the old ivy-covered cathedral-church, and the quaint houses down to the water's edge, all go to form an unusually artistic picture. Whichever way you turn you feel full of gratitude and admiration.



ON THE TAY NEAR DUNKELD.

I stroll along the river under the grateful shade of the trees to the Hermitage. As I enter the wicket-gate far along the riverside I am in a veritable tunnel of greenery. Here and there the sun lights up the trees and throws up every conceivable shade of green, and the reflection on the still pool which I now reach is equally enchanting, so perfect that you can hardly believe it is reflection, the delightful blue of the sky being forcibly realistic.

A little further on and a range of woodland opens out. Here is a silent dominion of young trees of every species, their tender greenery being brilliantly lighted up in sunshine, every fantastic design being thrown on the ground by the strong light, brilliant against the leafy undergrowth, whilst here and there a patch of bluebells adds tender colour to the scene. Out I come into



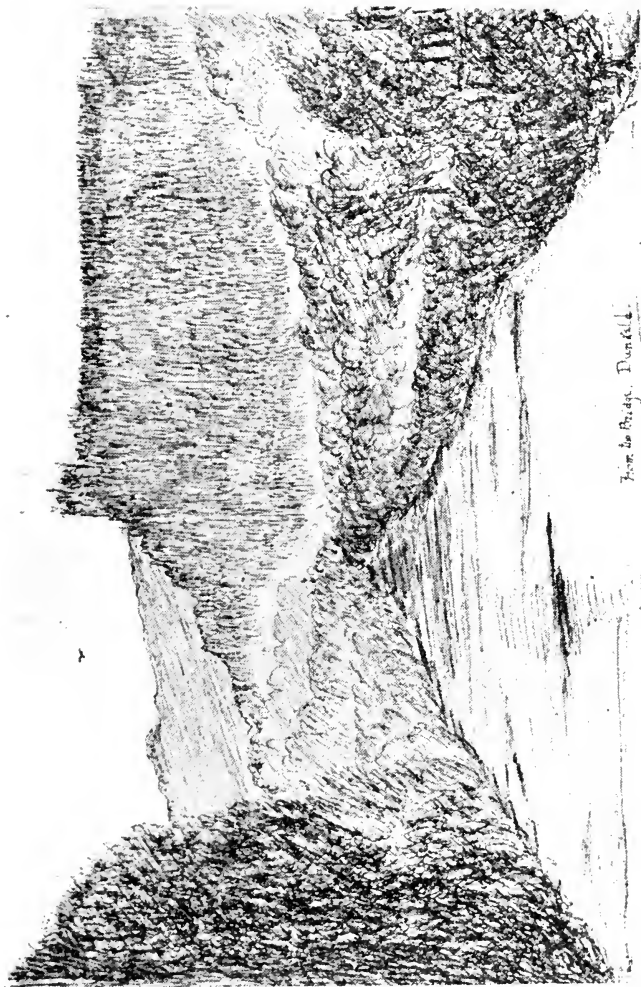
THE HERMITAGE BRIDGE, DUNKELD.

strong sunlight and behold the falls of the Tay, the rushing water leaping from rock to rock down into a narrow gorge, and issuing from thence tranquilly into the peaceful pool. And I gaze down into this deep abyss of rock and greenery upon the time-worn, grey old Hermitage. It is a wonderful sight.

I stroll back to the hotel, where I get a wonderfully good dinner, cooked by the landlord, who was formerly a *chef*. Such cooking I have rarely had in an English hotel. This evening I watch a fine sunset from the bridge at Dunkeld. What a lovely effect the setting sun produces on those pine trees right away up there! The beautiful tones of yellow and pink are delightful to look upon. The whole scene is delightfully restful. The river Tay flows on majestically, and the mind turns to the fine salmon which lie hidden in its waters. The old part of the cathedral close by is a ruin in good preservation, standing in delightful grounds, where are many rare trees. The interior of the ruins is most imposing. The grounds are the Duke of Athole's private property, his house being about a mile away.

Wednesday is beautifully fine, and I decide to depart from my usual plan and stay two nights at this excellent inn, where the catering is unrivalled. Therefore, after an excellent breakfast, I start out for Blairgowrie, twelve miles away. There is a nip in the air which makes it perfect for walking. The Duke is noted for his tree-culture, and so it is that you find timber everywhere. The hillside pines near Birnham have arrived at maturity, and men are cutting down thousands of them.

On my right is Murthly Water, which Millais



From the Bridge, Dunkeld.

FROM THE BRIDGE, DUNKELD.

often painted. I get a fine view just now of mist-clad mountains. What a picture, if one could only handle colours! But the subject is a big one, and requires a clever artist to depict it.

A turn in the lane and I reach the hamlet of Butterstone, all buried in roses and greenery, with a pretty stream running through it. Huge trees spread their branches across the road and form a bower or tunnel of greenery. The air is sweet and invigorating, making you swing along happily without effort. Marlee Loch, all quiet and peaceful, is a grand stretch of water embowered in trees.

Up to now I have walked two hundred and seventy miles, and I feel that it would hardly be possible to find a line of more beautiful country than I have passed through on this route. A huge mass of May-blossom fills the air with that delicious scent which I have breathed all along the line for a hundred miles or more, and which is as welcome again this morning as ever. It fills one with gladness.

Blairgowrie is famed for its raspberry gardens, where hundreds of tons of fruit are grown and yearly sent to the London market. I am told this is not likely to be a good season. The land is very dear, some of it being £16 an acre rent on lease.

I fall in at Blairgowrie with a man who is an expert in forestry. His conversation about tree-

planting is particularly interesting. He looks upon timber-growing as the coming industry, and says it will pay on land bought under £20 an acre. The return is necessarily slow but sure, and in the meantime the price of timber is gradually rising. He considers it the most productive way of employing a large portion of the land which is now out of cultivation. This could be accomplished without continuous employment of much labour, and all know that the labour question is the farmer's greatest difficulty.

My acquaintance walks back several miles with me on the Dunkeld road discussing these subjects. Later on I call at a cottage and get tea. Dirt is everywhere in evidence, but I enjoy the tea in spite of it, and as usual feel refreshed and able to move away joyfully back to my inn at Dunkeld, taking the low road by the riverside and passing Lord Dunedin's place—literally embowered in rhododendron and hawthorn blossoms. There is fine arable land about here in excellent cultivation.

I pass a large wood, which has recently been felled, belonging to the Duke of Athole. The huge, fallen firs had appeared like matches when I saw them at a distance, scattered here and there just as they had fallen. A steam saw-mill is installed to cut up the timbers and deal with them.

To-night I again dine sumptuously. Truly mine host is a *maître d'hôtel*, such as you would never expect to find in the Scottish Highlands.

After dinner I walk on to the bridge to see another fine sunset. The pines show up sharply against the bright yellow or golden sky. There is a purply shadow below them in which you lose their detail, whilst in the foreground the fine masses of sycamore and chestnut give a variety of shade most pleasing. The effect of the woodlands around is one that could never be forgotten, and the broad river gives to-night yet another picture as it hurries its shallow waters over the pebbles. It is too grand a subject for me to attempt to sketch, or even to describe.

On Thursday morning I get on to the bridge for a farewell look at lovely Dunkeld in full sunshine. I am truly sorry to leave, but I have to get to John o' Groats, and so I shoulder my knapsack in right good fashion, taking leave of my host and hostess, who have treated me so well. They tell me they are often annoyed by motorists rushing upon them and vulgarly asking "What sort of a place is this; is it a public-house?" and so forth.

Off I go, and out comes my Panama hat, for the sun is hot as I pass the imposing gates of the Duke of Athole's seat. On both sides of the road are fine trees and rhododendrons reaching

right away up the hills, where pines stretch up to the sky, standing out sharply, as I love to see them, against the blue heavens. I have looked hours at such a sight in the Jura mountains, and am always filled with pleasant recollections when I see pines standing out crisply like these.

The shade is grateful, and the cool, pine-laden air passes playfully over one's face. One feels active, alert, and full of happiness and contentment. All the senses are in perfect harmony. One really lives. Every faculty, mental and physical, is at its best as one tramps away without the least effort, never feeling the weight of knapsack, the pinch of shoe, or any impediment, day after day, week after week, untired, still full of interest, full of amusement, full of jolly humours and healthy excitement.

V. BLAIR ATHOLE: DALWHINNIE: AVIEMORE.

I chat with a handsome old lady who sits outside her cottage. With a tearful eye she recounts the death of her son in the South African war. Her other son is to-day out at exercise in Blair Park with the Scottish Horse. He is a stonemason, and she wants him to give up soldiering, for "it is a' reicht for the like o' the Marquis o' Tullibardine, whose pay is

going on, but for my ain son it is a sair cost," she says.

Perthshire is called "the Yorkshire of Scotland," and there is certainly a similarity. At Pitlochry the scenery is particularly fine; wooded hills and quick-running streams all along my route; but the numerous motors kick up no end of dust and spoil the roadsides and hedgerows completely. This is an intolerable nuisance.

I walk through the historic Pass of Killiecrankie, where in 1689 the Scots repulsed the troops of William and Mary and scattered them in five minutes. Macaulay tells how the Highlanders rushed forward with their broadswords, uttering fearful yells—the whole flood of Macleans, Macdonalds, and Camerons sweeping away Mackay's regiment in a twinkling; and the mingled torrent of redcoats and tartans went raving down the valley to the gorge of Killiecrankie. The Pass was choked by twelve hundred beasts of burden which carried the provisions and baggage of the vanquished army. It is a most romantic valley and very charming, while its historical association is most interesting.

At five o'clock I reach Blair Athole, where I stay the night. The landlord is an old game-keeper, and used to be in the employ of the late Prince Consort. He tells me all about the district between Blair and Balmoral. There is no road,

only a track, which is extremely difficult to follow for half the distance, running through extensive deer forests. I suggest taking that line, but he advises me not to do so, as there were no places to stay at for food and shelter, and I should be sure to get stranded.

As we were chatting in front of the inn up rolled a powerful motor car full of substantial-looking young men. One gentleman of great and flabby proportions asked me for particulars of the roads southward; and hearing that I was on a walking tour, very cynically remarked that he couldn't understand any man walking except for money. He did not think he could walk a mile. After surveying the gentleman I inform him I am probably twice his age if only half his weight, and that I could easily walk thirty miles a day for weeks on end. I suggest, too, that he would cut a sorry figure when the Germans come over to give us a thrashing.

The landlord tells me that the wild deer come down to within a few hundred yards of the inn, and are fed with hay in winter.

Next morning at breakfast a gentleman who is staying at the inn for the mountain-climbing asks if he may accompany me for ten miles or so. I assent with pleasure; and so we get away about half-past eight for one of the wildest walks in the Highlands. My companion is a clergyman,

fond of out-door exercise, especially walking, and is a naturalist, so I find his company truly agreeable. He knows much about rock formations, and is also a botanist; but I do not discover him dwelling upon the majestic scenery as a whole—the magnificent sky, the gorgeous hills, wooded here, then verging into vast moorland or deer forest. How different from one's preconceived notion of a deer forest! He diagnoses everything, unravels it, examines little bits, and he is satisfied. I prefer the *tout-ensemble* just as it is given to us. It is too mighty, too grand and glorious to dissect. We get along well together. I listen to his sermon in stones and tell him how the whole scenery impresses me, and we are both pleased.

We pass through Glengarry with its most lovely, rocky river bed and its rushing water. It is of slate formation, the parson says, as he breaks off a piece with his little hammer and explains all about it. But see it all *en masse*, and what a gorgeous picture you have! I cannot describe it now, and had no opportunity at the time. Impressions, to be of any value at all, should be written on the spot. Even then the task is great, but later on it is almost impossible to give any lucid idea of what has been seen. At least it is so to me. I often think Ruskin must have written his wonderful descriptions on the spot. He

could never have carried them away with him into his study.

A kindly motorist takes my friend back to Blair Athole, and I tramp on alone.

I had taken out some cold tea in a bottle, also some bread and butter, knowing there is no inn on this road till I reach my destination for to-day, the "Loch Ericht Inn," twenty miles away.

I am now lunching alone in this wildest of all parts, with deer forest on each side of the road. This is the Pass of Drumochter. Up there on



PASS OF DRUMOCHTER.

one of the mountains is an enormous patch of snow, which faintly reminds me of Switzerland. Again I begin to take in all this grandeur afresh, as you only can when alone.

The *Contour Book*, published for cycling and motoring, says, "Twenty miles of dreary, uninteresting road." To me this rugged, wild country in the Grampians is full of grandeur and romance. There are tall posts all along the roadside to guide you in winter when the snow is

deep. It gets wilder as you near Dalwhinnie. This part has left a vivid impression on my mind ever since I saw it six years ago when cycling to John o' Groats. Now that I can see it more leisurely and take in all its beauties, it is far more interesting and awe-inspiring. Here it was that I then saw a herd of deer coming down to drink. I strain my eyes, but can see nothing of the kind this time.

The inn at Loch Ericht, which is now re-built, owing to a fire which occurred two or three years ago, was the shooting-lodge I stayed at in April 1903. It is now transformed into a well-equipped hotel, with modern furniture, waiter, a bar, etc. The food is excellent, but all the old romance has gone. I miss the old-fashioned parlour full of fishing tackle, and the spacious old bedroom with log fire blazing cheerfully. All is changed, all is modern—"Sic transit gloria mundi."

Three fishermen and their wives are staying for the Loch Ericht fishing, but they do not speak highly of their sport; they only get small fish. The loch is sixteen miles long.

I am off next day at nine o'clock, one of the anglers electing to accompany me for the sake of the walk.

A couple of miles is sufficient for him, and he returns, and I tramp away through this charming, wild country. All through Newtonards, right on

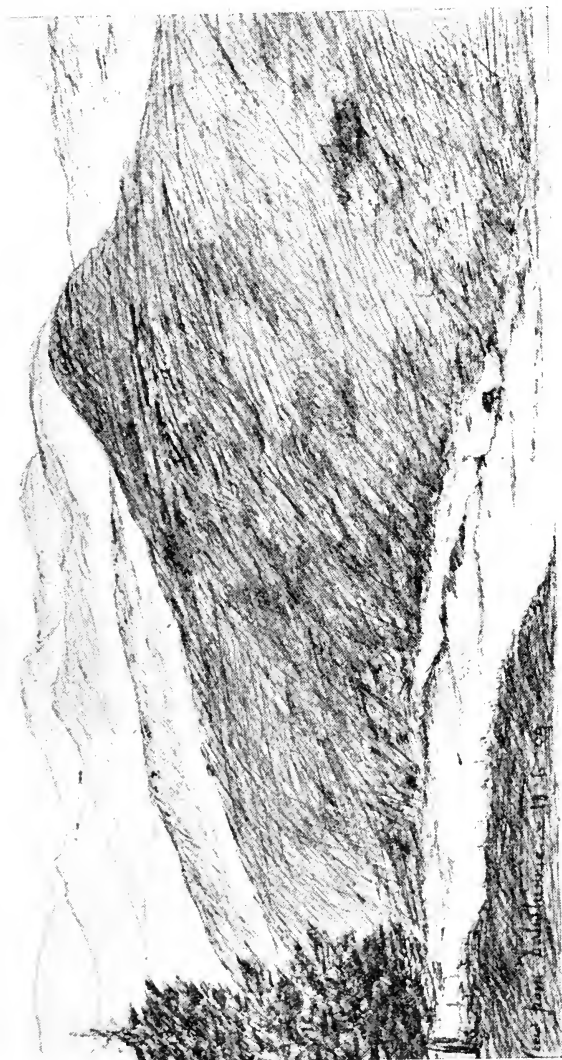
to Kingussie, is very pretty. The sun is powerful, but there is a cool breeze to temper the heat. The gruffs in the mountains are patched here and there with snow. I stay for half an hour at Kingussie, which is a garrison town and full of kilted Highlanders.

More and more I feel in agreement with R. L. Stevenson that "a walking tour should be gone upon alone." During the past two days I have had a companion. The old spirit of romance was leaving me in talking ordinary talk to these men. Even this is not so unromantic as bringing a friend with you, for in that case each carries his whole atmosphere with him, and that is what you should avoid in travel. You want a new atmosphere, new faces, manners, customs—everything. Leave the old, the customary, behind you, and you get new experiences, new delights, new expectations every day. You are free to do exactly as you please—to go or to stay, to walk quickly or slowly, to rest, to make notes or sketches, to talk to yourself, to meditate; to do all this when, or how, or where you like. When you are alone people talk to you, and you to them, more readily; they tell you things, and are not afraid of intrusion, as they would be when you are in company. Your powers of observation are keener, too, when alone; they are necessarily more concentrated. I find there are more

"incidents" occur when alone than when in company; the spirit of romance induces them more easily. There is also a greater disposition to "take the tone" from your surroundings, to stop frequently to inquire, to think upon what you see or feel, to talk, to jest, or to sympathise. You are, indeed, more akin to all your surroundings, human or otherwise. You are "one of them" for the time being, be the station high or low.

I am now approaching Aviemore, where I shall stay the night. The view is indescribably beautiful. I get out my sketch-book, but put it back in despair. The lines of hills, or mountains, in the distance are ever-changing in hue as the sunlight sweeps over them. That lovely blue haze rests in their recesses, whilst their sides offer every rich tint of russet which the eye could imagine. Over there is Cairngorm, then Cairntoul, Ben Macdhui, Ben Avon. There is nothing finer in the British Isles. Here is the forest of Aviemore, running for seven miles eastward, one level mass of russet brown tinged with green, as far as the eye can range, with that delicate, purple haze floating over the surface. One rarely sees such a level extent of wood all in one mass.

A fine picturesque sky of beautifully massed, purple clouds, almost motionless. Certainly one



GRANITE, VIEW FROM DALWHINNIE.

of the finest sights since I left home is this at Aviemore. The air is so pure and invigorating that you revel in the sunshine and march along, not feeling tired, even after a long day. And so I get back on the main road, and tramp away among the graceful silver birches, like lines of huge maiden-hair ferns, whilst up there to the left lies an immense beetling rock of a thousand feet, craggy, and yet tree-clad here and there.

My parson friend recommends me to stay at a certain temperance hotel, so I go there. After all, I prefer the good old-fashioned inn. There is an air of stability and comfort about them which you never get in temperance hotels. On the Continent you find no temperance hotels; they would laugh at the idea. It is entirely a British institution. I have never met teetotalers abroad, although I suppose there are such people. The slightly alcoholic wine of the country, "vin du pays," often diluted with water, is taken by old and young alike, and is, of course, much less harmful than our beer or spirits; or we will say more beneficial as an adjunct to food. Then, again, there is no difficulty in obtaining a licence to sell intoxicants—at any rate, in France. Any inn or shop can obtain such a licence easily and at very little expense. At my temperance hotel they give me high tea, after which I stroll out to see the sunset, the great red orb

giving a parting kiss to the distant Grampians. The dying light makes ruby lace work of the trembling aspens. After a chat with the landlady, who has just lost her daughter of consumption at seven-and-twenty, I turn in for the night. Consumption up here, in the Scottish Highlands! This is something to think about. Aviemore is now a collection of new villas, which have sprung up since the Highland railway came this way. There is a large hotel, golf links, etc. Being Sunday, I should have rested here to-day had the place been less modern. I therefore start out after breakfast, the landlord walking a little way with me on my way to the "Freeburn Inn."

The whole panorama of mountains, with the morning sun upon them, give one another lovely picture, the snow glittering brilliantly, and such a sky of many clouds floating eastward in every changing form of lightest vapour to deepest purple. The hills are so beautifully massed as to form an unusually perfect picture of its kind, but one which would puzzle even the greatest painter to reproduce.

I pass the old pack-horse bridge at Carr-bridge, where there is pretty rock and water scenery.

VI. MOY : INVERNESS : DINGWALL.

I overtake a countryman, who is evidently out for his Sunday walk. We get into conversation, and he tells me the finest deer forests are in this locality, and that he has often seen the deer here come close to the roadside. Last March the heavy snows stopped the traffic for weeks, and many deer were starved to death. My informant was a tall, weedy, pale-faced man, dressed in his Sunday best, probably a keeper, or woodman, but a poor specimen of humanity for such a locality, for his complexion was that of a collier. I began to wonder as he left me, after walking two or three miles, how such a consumptive looking man could be evolved in such a salubrious, invigorating atmosphere. He must have come of bad stock; surely an import from other climes. And so I sit on the heather in the strong sun, thinking over these things, and concluding that the immense strides made in sanitary science of late years have improved the physique of our population in towns, and enabled us to show a finer lot of men and women, physically and mentally, than can be found in the most beautiful country districts. The progress of education has contributed enormously to this end. Physical conditions by themselves will not

attain it. The mind must be cultivated as well as the body; the one acts upon the other. The dull routine of the farm labourer is not conducive to the best results. He may have abundance of sound food, fresh air and exercise, an easy mind, or rather a blank mind, and such conditions as go to make up a natural mode of life. But the mind must be cultivated simultaneously with the cultivation of the body in order to attain the best results in physical development. Locality is quite a secondary consideration. I remember talking to a labourer in Switzerland, near Chamounix. He was a poor, wretched specimen, and although only thirty-three years old, he looked fifty, in spite of his open-air life. But his mind was a blank, consequently there was a lack of cheerfulness and hope about the fellow which was quite depressing. He existed merely in a perfunctory way, and had no mind of his own, being tossed along from day to day by the course of events in hopeless, helpless fashion, without hope or aspiration, yet full of resignation. This is not the type of man we want—a poor, insignificant specimen, warped in mind and body alike. We want men strong and alert in mind and body, full of confidence, and decision, and cheerfulness; and such men must be trained mentally, or their physical condition can never be fully developed.

And so as I sit on the heather breathing the

fine stiff breeze rattling through the pines, I can distinguish among the crowd of hills or mountains Ben Macdhui well seamed with snow-drifts. Peat is burned in the occasional cottage one sees, but for miles on end there is frequently no habitation whatever.

I reach the "Freeburn Inn" in the afternoon, and right glad I am to renew my acquaintance with the landlady, who is a fine type of Highland woman. I have the inn all to myself. There is a constant change in the picture I get of the pine forest and the distant hills as the sunlight creeps over them this afternoon. Even the mass of pines which stand within a hundred yards of my window, their tops pricking sharply against the sky, are a picture in themselves. There is no end to the interest in studying them, their outlines, and colouring. Some are grim in their winter habit; others put forth just a touch of olive green; others bright green and of massy foliage, like huge feathers hanging and swaying in the breeze. There is a dead one, a mass of bronze, yet in decay showing up pleasantly among its living neighbours. The trunks assume varied hues, according to the shifting sunlight, bright, ashy greys and reds, whilst in the shade duller greys run down to black. Right away in the blackness of the interior can be seen dashes of green as the sun filters through the mass, but

there is no daylight visible; it is deep and impenetrable, and will become gloomy as the light fails. The early sunset is simply magnificent. The trees are literally bathed in golden light, every detail showing up sharply and every shade of colour quite intense. A thrush sings melodiously. There is no wind; all is still, grand, and full of purest light. Such a sight is rarely vouchsafed to one. And so I seek my comfortable, old-fashioned bed, to sleep, but not to dream, for the sleep is profound.

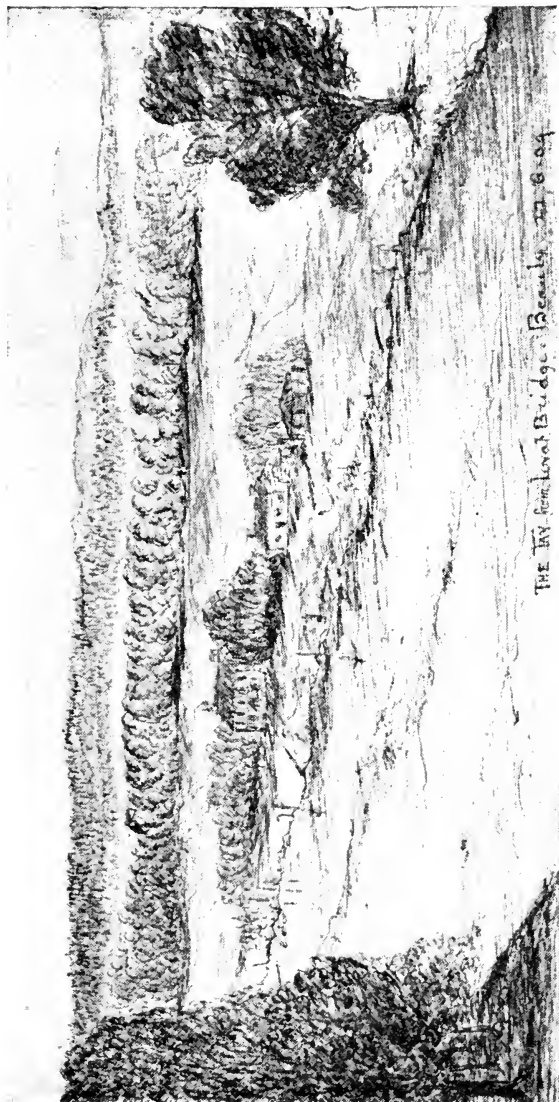
On Monday, the 21st of June, I am off before nine o'clock in beautifully fine weather. The whole countryside looks charming as I say "Good-bye" to mine host and hostess, who have made me so comfortable. The valley widens, and the river winds along towards Inverness. There are tall posts again along the roadside to guide the wayfarer when the snow lies deep on these moorland roads.

I pass Loch Moy with a castle at the head and a small island in the middle with an obelisk standing out, the whole scene silent as the grave, for there is not a breath of wind, and the water is like a sheet of lead. The forest-covered hills reach to the water's edge, reflecting the trees on the surface. It is uncanny in its stillness. This is the residence of The Macintosh, one of Scotland's richest landowners. Before reaching

Inverness I pass over a large tract of ground which has been cleared of its trees since I was here last. At one o'clock the sea is before me, a new aspect from what I have seen for the past hundred and fifty miles. Down, down I stride through pleasant meadows, such as we see in our own country, with arable land here and there. I pass well-dressed children barefooted, and I chat away to a gillie, a smart young fellow in a well-cut tweed suit; not the man one usually thinks of as a "gillie."

There are many old houses in Inverness, but not quaint ones like those at York and such-like old cities. The place is flat and uninteresting, and I see many thatched cottages in a tumble-down, filthy condition. There ought to be a fine promenade made on the riverside near the centre of the town, which is rather dirty and dreary. It would well repay the cost of laying out, and make a beautiful feature of the town.

Next day (my twentieth) it rains hard whilst I breakfast, and the place looks gloomy, but I feel in fine form and not likely to be at all influenced by the weather. So I march through the city, and get on to the Beaulieu road, admiring the mist as it lays so prettily on the hills. The roads are not marked, and when you ask your way they invariably say right when your road turns to the left, and *vice versa*. I don't think



THE TAY FROM LOVAT BRIDGE, BEAUTY.

they mean to mislead you; it is their customary way.

All along to Beaulieu the country is flat, but pretty. Every now and then you walk through an avenue of beeches or sycamores. It is well wooded, and mostly grazing land. I hear the note of the woodpigeon; it is always welcome. Now is the lark singing lustily in the sky out of sight, and down there in the deep grass I hear the raucous note of the corncrake rasping away. Lovat Bridge is a famous rendezvous for anglers, but there are none in sight as I lean over and take in the beautiful view, particularly the one upstream.

Now I am in Ross, where there is good farming everywhere. I have walked fourteen miles this morning, yet I can see Inverness across the Beaulieu Firth, which I might have ferried had I wished to go the shortest way. This is not my plan. I want the most interesting route, not the shortest.

The Muir of Ord is now a common used as golf links. The air is heavily charged with moisture and quite cold, but delightful for walking.

I get afternoon tea at Muir of Ord village, a simple inn, where I hear a female voice singing "Faites lui mes aveux," from Gounod's *Faust*; and such singing as one rarely hears, even in opera. The accompaniment, too, is perfect.

Indeed the singer is an artist of high order. The landlady says she is "an opera singer from London"—that is all she knows. Later, I learn that the lady is staying out here for rest and quiet, and practises these "foreign songs" every day.

On I go to Conan, a pretty village with well-thatched cottages. Here I cross the Cromarty Firth, and get to Dingwall in the rain. Strathpeffer is near here, but as it is a fashionable watering-place and out of my route it has no interest for me. When on a walking tour it is well to avoid fashionable places; there is no artistic or romantic interest in them, and your appearance causes you to be stared at by the people who are there in all their finery.

The inn at Dingwall is excellent. The landlord is a *chef* and does most of the cooking, which is exceedingly good. A man tells me about a big day's walk of forty miles he once had with the McIntosh of Moy when the latter was over seventy. Indeed, he gives me several instances to show what excellent walkers many of the kilted gentry used to be. They were not, however, as strong on their legs at the present day. Luxury had made great inroads in the physique of the Highlander of to-day. He once knew a worthy baronet who often walked to Inverness, over forty miles from his place, and after going

through the market he would walk back home, getting there next day, of course.

Leaving Dingwall I walk along the Firth of Cromarty, having the sea at my right. It is a charming walk, and I pass some of the finest examples of Scotch cattle I ever saw. The pasture suits them, for they are in beautiful condition.

VII. SKIBO CASTLE: MR. ANDREW CARNEGIE.

The Lairds hereabouts all wear the kilt and are called after the locality or village in which they live. McLeod of Alness would be addressed as Alness. At Evanton I had a long chat with an angler, who told me there was excellent salmon and trout fishing here, for there had been a "spate" or flood in the river.

At Alness I take shelter from a shower and have a long talk with a baker, who speaks of the slender profits in his trade. He is a Glasgow man who had, however, learned his business in London, for which city he still had a great affection, far more than for his native city—a circumstance quite unusual with Scotsmen generally. And then I peg on through Invergordon, all along the sea coast, and shortly down comes the rain. I am in the open, where there is no shelter whatever, so I get down into the ditch and make the

best of it. It clears, and out I come from my cramped position, and soon begin to dry as I slip gaily along in the stiff breeze that is blowing.

At Delny I stop at what is called a temperance hotel, but I see they have a little bar at the end where liquor is sold. The lady of the house is Irish to all appearances, and has not spent much time on her toilet. This is the only place, however, where I can get tea, and so I enjoy the tea and bread and butter. "*Fames est optimus coquus.*" The landlady of Irish brogue and unkempt appearance is a kindly soul withal, and stays chatting to me whilst I eat. She will be glad to put me up here for the night if I wish. People come all the way from London to stay here. "What for?" I ask. "For the wild duck shooting," she says, without noticing my amazement.

After tea I peg away, full of renewed vigour. There is nothing equal to tea of an afternoon. It now turns out sunny, and the Cromarty presents quite a different aspect. Again the country becomes thickly wooded, with quick-flowing streams. This is Kildary, with its thatched white cottages, all so lonely and quiet. And so I march into Tain, which I reach at seven o'clock, later than my usual time of arrival. Tain is a clean, quaint, and quiet little town, but as there is nothing particularly to be seen I get early to bed.



Meikle Ferry - Skibo Castle

22.6.09

MEIKLE FERRY, SKIBO CASTLE.

Next morning I am off at nine o'clock and make for the Meikle Ferry. Here you put up a flag for the ferryman who rows across the Dornoch Firth. Across the water is Skibo Castle, Mr. Andrew Carnegie's place. The ferryman tells me I can take a near cut through his grounds, and so when I land at the other side I inquire at one of the lodges if I may do so. Just as I ask, Mr. Carnegie drives up in a single-horse carriage and I salute him, saying how delighted I should be to take the road through his grounds. Mr. Carnegie assents with pleasure, and on learning that I have walked all the way from Harrogate he asks if I will stay and lunch with him, which I cordially accept. He tells me of a remarkable swimming-bath which he has in his grounds, which he assures me surprised the late King, and he sends a man to show it to me, telling me I can have a swim in tepid sea-water, then look round the grounds, when he will join me after he has played golf a little.

So off I go, and am certainly delighted with the magnificent marble swimming-bath, which is, I suppose, unequalled in Europe—at least, I was told so. There are also Russian, Turkish, and other baths. The man shows me to a dressing-room, of which they have twenty, and I am soon dressed in a bathing-suit and swimming about in the delightfully buoyant sea-water. How very

refreshing after my walk! The attendant shows me how, by an electrical arrangement, the fine plate-glass roof gradually folded back and thus made this large swimming-bath an open-air one. No wonder the King stood in amazement when he saw all this. The sea-water is heated to a temperature of about eighty degrees, just a pleasant and agreeable condition.

I then walk about the extensive and beautiful grounds, well kept, surrounded with fine trees—indeed, a perfect paradise, since the air is balmy, full of delicious odours, and tempered by an exquisite sea-breeze. One would have to travel far in order to meet with so delicious and so enchanting a place. Indeed, the whole tone of it is such as you could hardly imagine existing in the British Isles. And the morning being sunny, with a clear, dazzling sky, your thoughts wander quickly away to Italy, France, or Spain. Festoons of roses, acres of lovely greensward, rushing waters, and the ducal castle standing up there in all its majesty. All these beauties I feast upon, even though they be the work of man, and consequently never so telling, so soul-stirring, as are the great natural beauties of mountain and flood. The more you live out of doors among natural scenes of hedgerow, fields, moors, mountains, rivers, and woodlands, the more exacting you become in your appreciation of man's

handiwork, indoors or out-of-doors, whether it be beautiful pictures or sculpture, architecture or artificial landscape. Musing on such thoughts, I observe my host driving through the grounds, and soon we are talking away on the best of terms.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie is a slight man of seventy, with a pleasant face and short-cut beard—an active, alert man, with a kindly eye, a ready smile. It is said that millionaires never smile. Mr. Carnegie is certainly the exception, for during the whole of our conversation I am particularly impressed by the pleasant, agreeable play of his features, all denoting cheerfulness and a kindly disposition.

A born Scotchman, without accent as such, but just the tone denoting the country of his adoption, America: shrewd, acute, clear, catching everything you say, every argument you advance; a well-read man of the world; a keen observer of all around him; a leader of men, as he has shown by his steady progress in the world of commerce from the humblest to the highest and wealthiest position in the universe. Broad-minded; for did he not take into partnership from time to time no less than forty-six workmen, who are now every one of them millionaires, yet not one of which put a penny of capital into his business? Have we another such example throughout the whole world?

Mr. Carnegie leads me into his library, and we are soon *in medias res*. Needless to say, one feels at once the desirability of arranging one's thoughts and expressing them with perspicuity. There is no room for trifling here, no room for empty compliments. The question is put, and attention is required; firstly to listen, then to reply with ease and deliberation. There is no fencing with the point at issue, no needless *finesse*. Mr. Carnegie speaks straight, and you feel that he requires and has a right to look for a straightforward answer. Politics are discussed, of course, and I am particularly interested in his views on various social problems. Mr. Carnegie is a reformer. He believes in the State taking a heavy toll on all estates at death, and tells me that men should be brought to feel that the community has helped very largely to make their wealth, and not they themselves individually. Therefore, the community should benefit proportionately when the individual dies. Meddle with him as little as possible during the time he is accumulating his wealth, but take toll when he himself is done with it. It is difficult to place a limit to what the State, or the community through the agency of the State, should take from a rich man's estate at his death. Such taxes should, of course, be graduated. The millionaire's estate, states Mr. Carnegie, should be made to contribute one-half to the community.

"Including Mr. Carnegie?" I say.

"Including Mr. Carnegie," he replies with a smile.

A rare sight—the old gentleman, standing in the doorway of his library just as we were moving away to lunch, smiling and repeating with his soft voice Shakespeare's words—

"the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the State."

Such a policy, he says, would tend to make a man administer his wealth during his lifetime. It would make him alive to the duties he owes to the community at large, who, having helped so largely to create his great wealth, have a natural claim to partake of it. It would make him more alive to the needs of his less fortunate fellow-men. Your rich men, your aristocracy, cannot be induced to see their obligations in this light. They go on drawing their increased rentals and royalties and mineral rights without ever recognizing the fact that all this enormous aggregation of wealth is not due to all prudence or foresight of their own, but to the needs and circumstances and requirements of the community. "And now," he says, "that the State proposes to take toll on this vast unearned increment, your dukes and lords cry out as if you were taking their last drop of blood."

Speaking of the inequality of taxation which exists between rich and poor in proportion to their accumulated wealth, Mr. Carnegie feels that less than two per cent. of the population own the greater part of the wealth of the country, whereas the bulk of the taxes are paid by the poorer division of the community. The rich possess twelve thousand millions sterling, and pay thirty-eight millions in taxes. The middle and working classes possess four thousand millions, and pay eighty-two millions in taxes. The ratio would be represented in the following manner:—A penny rate represents the taxation of the rich in proportion to their wealth, a fourpenny rate the middle classes, and a tenpenny rate the working classes.

Mr. Carnegie considers that those people who only possess sufficient means requisite for their daily wants should be free from all taxation, and that those who do contribute to the support of Government ought to do so in proportion to their ability to pay. Also it should be the province of Government to aid those who are able and willing to help themselves—the “swimming” tenth, he calls them, as opposed to the “submerged” tenth. The latter should be isolated and taken care of.

Mr. Carnegie has no respect whatever for our hereditary system of legislation in the House of

Lords, and said such a system would not be tolerated in any other country in the world. Life peers he would agree to, but never to those who form the great majority in our House of Lords, and who are, comparatively speaking, quite unfitted to veto the deliberations of the People's House. Indeed, Mr. Carnegie rather emphasizes his opinions against hereditary rank altogether, treating the whole subject as appreciably amusing. Asked what he thought of the late King, Mr. Carnegie smiles and says his Majesty possessed great tact, good judgment, and an affable, dignified manner.

When at Skibo King Edward asked if there was any honour he could bestow upon Mr. Carnegie in consideration of what the latter had done for his fellow-men. Mr. Carnegie thanked the King for his very kind consideration, and said that an autograph letter embodying his Majesty's sentiments on such a matter would be an all-sufficient recognition of the same. The King sent the letter, together with his own portrait.

Speaking of Tariff Reform, Mr. Carnegie ridicules the idea of our returning to it. Our chief import, food, it would never do to tax. The workers would never submit to it. America was in a very different position, being the richest country in the world—the greatest coal, iron, copper, lead, wheat, cotton, and oil country. All

these resources, within itself, were wanting in Britain, and she must get them from the cheapest possible outside source. Any tax upon them would fall upon the consumer. It is no use for you to tax steel, he says, because you are unable to produce the best. This statement surprises me; but not being in a position to combat it, I hold my peace.

Mr. Carnegie appears to think lightly of wealth, and certainly does not give it that all-absorbing position in life which millionaires are thought to do. Wealth does not generally go for increased human happiness, and those who have laid great store on money-getting are as a rule miserable men. The ambition to pile up wealth is, in his estimation, low, mean, and vulgar. Wealth rarely lasts out more than three generations, except when safeguarded by the law of primogeniture as it exists in the United Kingdom, and such laws, he says, ought to be repealed.

As to Socialism, he thinks human nature itself must suffer a complete change before such aims can be attained as are promulgated to-day by most of the advanced Socialists. Try and improve the present condition of the people, and do not meddle with the dim and distant future, which will be much better able to legislate for itself when the time comes than one can hope to do prematurely. Much harm and backwardation is

done to reasonable reform by such Socialists aiming to accomplish impossibilities instead of taking a moderate line of action and dealing with circumstances as they exist at the present.

Thrift and temperance he takes to be the keynote of all progress in every walk of life, and they generally go together.

Mr. Carnegie would like to see the land made to produce a great deal more than under present conditions of tenure it is capable of producing. Not merely more wheat and food products, but a considerably increased number of fine, healthy men and women. This can only be accomplished by multiplying the number of small holdings, so making infinitely more small owners. There would then be no more talk about land nationalization. But to accomplish all this the land must be free. It can then be developed and made to produce all that it is capable of producing. Ownership naturally gives a vigorous tone which a tenant can never possess, and goes to produce a fine race of men and women willing and able to defend their country against all assault.

Mr. Carnegie thinks well of the old age pensions, and ridicules the claim of the Socialists that the scheme is theirs. It is the outcome of the united, best efforts of all politicians who have the welfare of the masses at heart. Speaking of labour—manual labour—as highly honourable, he still

considers the productive labour of the mind as being of still higher order, and he shows marked reverence for the master minds of all nations and ages.

Mr. Carnegie tells me that he walked with his knapsack in France and Germany when he was younger. He considers walking the very best means of seeing a country, its people, and their surroundings; and strongly advises me to keep it up as long as I possibly can. There is certainly no healthier, more interesting, or more instructive form of outdoor amusement.

After lunch I am admiring some paintings of great past statesmen, and on Charles James Fox's name being mentioned I tell Mr. Carnegie that I am distantly related to the great modern Demosthenes.

"Ah!" he said, "that is something I should feel proud of. Fox was a great man, a very great man."

"But he was the son of a nobleman," said I, "and you are not prepossessed with the nobility, you say."

"But he was a man of brains. Noblemen don't count; brains do," he replies.

And so it is in touring on foot you get in touch with people whom you would never meet under ordinary conditions of travel. There is no day without its incident, often full of agreeable surprises, of interest or instruction.

VIII. DUNROBIN: WICK.

The country on to Golspie is pretty, the sea being in sight all the way. Nearing the village I pass two motorists who have broken down, or rather whose car has got heated. We meet in the evening at the inn, and are soon on friendly terms.

Next morning, after a substantial breakfast, as usual, I leave this good hostelry at Golspie with its obliging landlord, neat-handed waitresses, and excellent food. Would that all inns were like it! Up the hill and I pass the fine entrance gates to Dunrobin Castle. A pack of hounds are baying to my left, as if they had run a fox to ground. This is hardly likely in June, of course. Further on is the Duke's private railway station, opposite the main gates to the castle, all very grand and imposing. From the waiting-room to the castle there is an avenue of limes.

In the meadows are fine types of cattle, Highland and otherwise, and I notice a beautiful Arab mare and foal.

My intended resting-place to-night is Helmsdale, but I am warned against staying there, as they are changing landlords, and the place is gutted, undergoing alterations. So they tell me at Golspie. I am thinking about this happy

prospect when my motor friends pass me, pull up, and again advise me to take a lift with them and go on to Wick, where I can get comfortable quarters for the night, there being no good, clean inn midway, as I knew from experience of my former visit. So I get comfortably ensconced behind them in their car and away we go.

The Ord of Caithness is so steep that I walk for miles with one of my companions. The roads are bad, too, which makes it somewhat difficult for the motor, which is only of very low power and a four-seater.

At Langwell, the Duke of Portland's shooting lodge, is one of the steepest hills in the United Kingdom. Along the roadside the Duke has made one or two offshoot roads in case of brake failures. Much of the gradient is one in nine.

I am curled up among portmanteaux in the bottom of the car, rather cramped, and perhaps less comfortable than if I were walking. But these are good fellows, and seem fond of my company, as I am of theirs. Drenched, we reach Wick, and after change and tea my friends ask me to run up to John o' Groats with them, which is only sixteen miles, and we will all dine together at eight o'clock.

No; I let them go, and spend an hour or two in looking round Wick, admiring some of the handsome fisherwomen. The landlord tells me

they are of Norse descent. Certainly I see some fine types. I remember to have seen similar types of women in Western Brittany: tall, well-made, blue-eyed, light-haired women, with pink and bronze complexion, carrying themselves handsomely; an easy, dignified, clear, straight look, such as you rarely see. Indeed, I am much impressed by the majestic bearing of more than one such woman as I stroll through the streets of this old Norse town this summer evening.

My friends did not return at eight nor at nine, but I determined to wait for them, as they had been so kind to me. At half-past nine their horn was heard, and we are soon enjoying the excellent dinner which our landlady had promised we should have. Excellent soup, fish, cutlets, chicken, and omelettes, such a dinner as you would never expect to get at this extreme end of our island. My friends found the John o' Groat's hotel empty, but kindly told the landlady I was arriving next day, and she must have a well-aired bed ready for a pedestrian who had "walked all the way from Land's End"; and much more eulogy.

We sit chatting till midnight, my friends again inviting me to go with them by the western route down to the Lowlands, which, of course, I gratefully decline.

Next morning is bright and cool, an ideal day for walking, and so I start out on my last lap to John o' Groats. I find that, taking into account the lift I got with my motor friends, I have still covered fifteen miles more than the distance direct to John o' Groats. This is owing to my having gone out of the direct way in order to see something or other not to be seen in the ordinary route. As I have previously remarked, my end and aim is to see as much of a country and its people, habits, methods, etc., as possible, and not to accomplish any great feat of pedestrianism. With me it has never been a feature of any walking tour to set myself a certain mileage to be accomplished in a certain time. Such a course would tend to destroy much of the pleasure which always accompanies a walking tour. Make your plans beforehand if you will, but the best results are not attained by slavishly adhering to them under all circumstances.

Some people say, make no plans, but just take which ever course your inclination leads you to take. This is a mistake. You must have a plan, and a definite, well-thought-out plan too, if your tour is to be a success, if you are wishful to get the most out of it. There must, too, be a certain give-and-take element in your scheme, free from restraint or any harassing circumstance; otherwise the very independence of your tour on

foot will be destroyed. You must be left free to go or stay, to do this or that, to take this road or that, or to stand on your head if you feel so disposed.

And so I tramp along, full of freedom and happiness, for there is a thrill of excitement in this somewhat dreary last lap of sixteen miles, that pleasant feeling which inspires you even among the plainest surroundings, and which is not dependent on weather, scenery, or any other factor. It is the outcome of fine condition, a perfect balance of mental and physical faculties, independence, freedom from restraint, and, as Hazlitt calls it, "certain jolly humours," which possess you.

IX. JOHN O' GROATS.

Leaving Wick, a great open plain, treeless as far as the eye can reach, is before us; but the sunlight makes even this look pretty. Some gipsies are camping here, and they sound as if very happy: the ring of laughter from clear female voices proclaims it. I feel as well and fit as when I left home twenty-three days ago, and certainly as full of enjoyment as ever. I trip along a road which six years ago I biked over. I am finishing my pleasurable task easily and calmly, but the pure enjoyment of it all is none

the less acute. The sea presents a pretty sight this morning as I stride alongside its blue expanse. Right away out can be seen the smoke from big ships, while fishing craft are dotted here and there in the foreground.

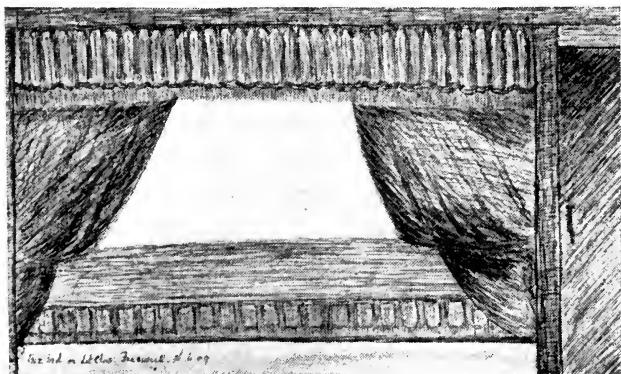
I don't notice any marked peculiarity in the habits and manners of the people hereabouts which one might expect in such an outlandish district. There is none of the broad Scotch accent of the Lowlands; there is more an Irish tone in it than anything I can think of. The people are well mannered. I wish our working people in the West Riding of Yorkshire were as well-mannered. It seems to me that the lower classes are well or ill-mannered according to the manners of the best people by whom they are surrounded, or with whom they are brought into contact.

Flagstones are laid edgeways-up for walling, and I noticed the same method as I approached Land's End. They may be serviceable, but they are very inartistic in appearance. There is some fairly good grazing land, and the sheep are of good size and of medium wool.

I talk to several crofters. One man pays £21 a year for twenty acres and a hovel, and it seems excessive, even in the neighbourhood of a town or a railway, but here it is altogether exorbitant. The tenant tells me he had been on it all his life,

and could only just manage to eke out a livelihood, and he works very hard all his waking hours. He seems a very decent, active old fellow, and his complaint, made in a reasonable tone, was quite free from all envy, hatred, and malice against his landlord, who, to my mind, is getting more than double the value of the land.

Such grievances as these are real, and are



BOX BED NEAR JOHN O' GROATS.

bound to bring about a reform in our system of land tenure. Five miles from John o' Groats the country becomes rather weird in appearance, and as it threatens rain I peg away, but it overtakes me just as I pass some cottages, where I stop and ask if they would kindly make me a cup of tea. They are nice, well-mannered people, with three or four young, light-haired

children, real Norse in appearance. The wife was formerly maid to a great lady, and had stayed with her ladyship at Windsor Castle in good Queen Victoria's time. The husband was a gamekeeper, and tells me they had a fair show of grouse and usually of partridges, but the latter had been scarce for the past season or two. In the cottage I notice a bed let into the wall, which reminds me in appearance of the "lit clos" of Brittany, only this is far less elaborate, having none of the carved oak work of the Breton bed. I make a rough sketch of it, much to the surprise and amusement of all present.

The rain has ceased, and I have enjoyed my cup of tea in spite of it being stewed on the fire. So I say good-bye to the cottagers, who refuse to be paid for the tea. Thus I have recourse to a gift to the children, who seem amazed at a sixpence.

I am soon in the "red road," the last lap to John o' Groats. The Orkneys burst upon me, spread out in the calm, leaden sea, Stroma looking like a huge emerald on the surface of the water.

At five o'clock I catch sight of the John o' Groats hotel, with its octagon tower and flagstaff, and I pace down the road to my "Ultima Thule" in quite as good form as when I left home.

A kindly welcome and a good supper, after

which I walk out and breathe the beautiful, scented air of sea and peat, so soft and balmy. All is restful and quiet; there is hardly a sound from the few cottages belonging to the fishermen, who are the only living souls for miles around. The landlady shows me the octagon room containing an octagon table, telling me that John o' Groat's seven sons were always quarrelling as to who should sit at the head of the table, therefore John made an octagon table, whereby each place was equal in importance.

Next day, Sunday, I decide shall be a day of rest. My bedroom window looks out upon the sea, and the air is heavily charged with moisture as I dress this morning, for my window, as usual, has been open at top and bottom. My breakfast is served by Ina, a fine type of Norse girl with steel-blue eyes, light hair, somewhat lank, and ruddy complexion, and with a most agreeable manner. Her father, a fisherman, of course, as nearly all the population of two hundred are, lives across at Stroma. They get the finest cod and lobsters hereabouts. Ina says none but fine fish can exist in the strong, live waters of the Pentland Firth; the current is so strong that the weaklings cannot exist there. Certainly the fried cod she gives me is beautiful—so fresh and firm and full of flavour. And the coffee is good, so I am on excellent terms with all the world.

I encourage Ina to talk. She is neither bashful nor forward, but dignified and calm, with a pleasant, contented smile in all she says. I adjudge her a steady woman of over thirty, but the landlady says she is much younger than that. Hard work, and exposure to the weather for generations, form such model examples. They may not possess that delicacy of texture in their complexions, but their robust, weather-beaten features, the clear, composed eye, the sound teeth and abundant hair, more than compensate for this. And their honest, easy, independent yet not familiar manner, makes you admire them. It is all so original, so different from what you meet with elsewhere. Our boasted progress and education have not yet spoiled all the naturalness in the world; perhaps they have not reached these out-of-the-way places. Or is it that these people are naturally well-bred, naturally superior to the ordinary run of workaday people? Surely there is something in this. As I talk to this Norse girl I think it will take more than one generation of our vaunted educational and social progress to undo what is inbred in her.

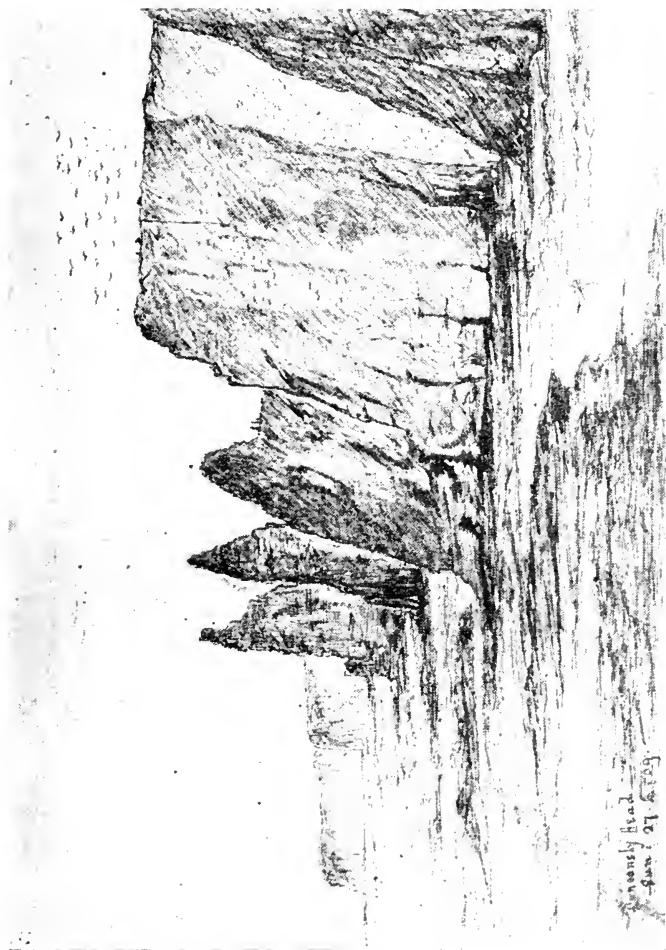
A peat fire is burning brightly in the little parlour where I breakfast on the excellent fish and ham and eggs. I take up the visitors' book and find my old signature on April 9th, 1903, and think of the thousands of miles I have tramped

since then. All the entries here are record-breaking achievements, or at least those referring to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. No one seems to have come for the pure enjoyment of the tour. They have all come with one object—to get to John o' Groats in as little time as possible. The landlady tells me she never remembers anyone strolling in, as she calls it, as I have done. Nearly all walkers had trainers, or pacers, or some one with them. In some cases they arrived in a most pitiable, exhausted condition, and had to be put to bed at once and



carefully treated. She alludes to several walkers by name whom I remember to have read about as doing the journey from Land's End against time. They invariably brought a noisy crowd with them and rarely stayed the night, unless they happened to arrive in the middle of the night, which was not an infrequent occurrence. The visitors' book has run into several volumes, and is interesting. My own entry of having walked from Land's End "for pleasure," taking eight weeks in all, appears to be the only one of its kind.

The air is cold and invigorating as I make for Duncansby Head. The shore is one immense tract of little white cowrie shells—pretty, fantastic-shaped reefs of exquisite colouring in red and brown with variegated mosses. I pass the little fishing-boats, moored under the lea, with their lobster-traps. Here again all is quiet—not a soul to be seen as far as the eye can reach. A huge vessel, a man-o'-war, it seems, sails past majestically. Myriads of sand-snipe are running about. A fox-terrier from the inn has made friends with me, and it is amusing to watch him chase them; how near he gets as they scuttle along, just taking wing as he grabs at them, and then settling down again further on. The ozone is powerful enough almost to revive the dead. I never felt anything like this air—so soft and yet so bracing, so charged with the essence of life. Why don't consumptives



DUNCANSBY HEAD.

come up here to live? I feel sure it would cure them. It makes one deliriously vigorous. The dog feels it, and jumps about so lustily that I am afraid of him getting over the cliffs. And now, as I stand all alone among these sheer precipitous crags, shooting up hundreds of feet out of the roaring sea, I come across millions of gulls and puffins, screaming at my intrusion till the noise is positively deafening and very weird. The puffins have a quick, jerky movement in their flight, and are not so graceful as the gulls.

Stroma is a couple of miles or so across, and yet no place is more difficult of access. The currents of the Pentland run so swiftly, and there are so many to contend with, that this little island is frequently cut off from all communication for a week, or even a fortnight at a time. The Orkneys are dimly seen further out to my left. The sea is rolling in, and lashes the huge cliffs with thunderous roar. A deep gully or ravine two or three yards wide presents a strange, dizzy sight as I look down its rocky sides to the bottom, where the white foam rushes in hurriedly, and the whole gulf screams deafening to the echo with these restless myriads of sea-birds. It is a sight to look at quickly and to abandon, it is so forbidding.

Further on a grand scene bursts upon view. The huge cliff is broken off into a bay of great

magnificence, the parti-coloured stone shooting out of the sea layer on layer, each one bearing its own peculiar tint and carrying moss and grasses of varied hues. Ledge upon ledge is covered with puffins, now nesting with their young, screaming plaintively at my intrusion as they rush and flit across these cavernous gullies. Even the roar of the sea is mitigated by the penetrating shriek of these singularly uncanny-looking birds.



DUNCANSBY HEAD.

Moving on I come to an immense gully, cut clean out of the rock as it were, or rather riven out by some terrible earthquake. It is of huge proportion, which one can hardly regard unmoved. It is literally packed with birds, and the sound of their plaintive cry in this deep gorge is deafening, so that you can hardly hear the sea at all. My terrier has disappeared, and I begin to fear he has fallen over the cliff, down which I

dare not look. But he turns up again. One has to be careful in walking, as there are so many trappy holes where you may easily happen an accident in this out-of-the-way place.

The finest piece of Duncansby now comes to view. Two coned rocks stand out from the mainland, and a third is being gradually worn away by the sea. The three peaks form a pretty picture full of fine colouring, the two promontories behind them jutting into the sea, half-hidden in mist, forming a good background, whilst the high, rugged promontory in the foreground shows off three massive cones to advantage. It well repays my stay of an extra day to see this magnificent coast scenery at Duncansby Head, with its fantastic rocks. And so I stroll back to afternoon tea.

X. THE CROFTERS.

Next morning I am off after breakfast and a cordial farewell. I take the road to Thurso, lightening my knapsack at the post-office at Canisbay by sending home several articles of wearing apparel, etc. I dispatch post-cards with the John o' Groats stamp on them, which the hotel people keep for the purpose.

As I leave I meet another fine type of Norse girl carrying oatmeal from a diminutive corn-mill. A tall girl, lithe of limb, good carriage

and well-poised head, steel-blue eye, light hair and pinky bronze complexion, all denoting strength, activity, and grace. Truly a fine young woman, with an easy, dignified, straight look. Her accent and manner are most agreeable as she replies to my salute and inquiry about the road.

About midday I overtake a clergyman who is walking home. He has been preaching at Stroma, and appears delighted to talk to me. I tell him I am going to the Orkneys in order to see the crofters, their cottages, and general mode of life. He tells me I can see finer examples of crofters in his district, and save a rough, unpleasant crossing. If I will put up with his humble fare he will be delighted to have me stay with him at the Manse to-night, and he will then show me the crofters in his parish. I accept his kind proposal and he is pleased. We tramp away together and get to his cottage early in the afternoon. After tea we stroll out to see the old folk, and I am at once delighted with all I see. One—a Mrs. Geddes, a fine, tall, handsome old lady, fit to be a duchess—was reading her Bible, and received us with great dignity in her little cottage of one room, four or five yards square, all beautifully clean and neat, with large open fireplace and peat fire on the floor, and bed in the corner. As we talk to this grand old lady I wonder how such refinement and dignity comes to be hidden away from the

world. What a blessing it would be for the rising generation to have such models of excellence before them! When I told Mrs. Geddes that we had no such handsome old ladies with us she smiled and put it aside with ease and dignity, not showing the least confusion at my remark as we shook hands on leaving. Such people are our true nobility, the salt of the earth.

Sinclair Leisk is in his ninety-first year and is still able to work. Indeed, he was busy in the cowshed when we arrived. He remembers Waterloo and hearing about "Old Nap," as he called Napoleon. He showed me newspaper references to the Coronation of Queen Victoria, which he had kept for over seventy years in an old earthenware jar, along with other more recent references to the good queen's career, which he alluded to with emotion. A wiry little, clean-shaven, strong-boned man. Oatmeal and milk, with bacon occasionally, had been his diet—no butcher's meat: he had never had it, he said. No whisky? Why, certainly not; he had scarcely tasted it all his life: it was quite beyond his means.

The parson tells me this is applicable all round. They are too poor to be anything else than sober people, even if they had the inclination otherwise, which he says they have not.

We stroll along, calling here and there, stopping

to chat with everybody we meet; they are all well-mannered and agreeable. My friend is a bachelor. His housekeeper is a fine old Scots woman, a Lowlander, with strong accent; a dear, old creature, who is very kind to me. Her oaten cakes, made of fresh ground oatmeal straight from the mill, are delicious. We in Yorkshire never get the same warm, full flavour of the oats. The cottages are all strongly built, of one storey, thatched, or occasionally slated. They contain a living room and a compartment holding an extra bed. Large ingle-nook fireplaces with peat fires on the ground; kettle and pan hang over for cooking. Cakes, oaten and wheaten, are made on a bakestone, which accounts in a measure for their excellent flavour.

I express a wish to get across to Stroma, but no one would undertake crossing to-day. It was impracticable, they say, and the parson says so too, adding that the Stroma people are exactly like these, simple, steady, religious people.

After supper we walk out and make more calls. Alex. Wallis, a hardy, rugged-featured man of sixty, with ruddy complexion and beard, is a fisherman. David, his brother, is a farmer. Two sisters, Bella and Jennie, live with them, strong, plain women, but good conversationalists. They are delighted to hear about my walks, especially when I spoke about my tramp through

France, where, in Burgundy, grapes could be picked for the asking. How they wish I would come up in the winter, when they were not fishing, and lecture to them. They would take me across to Stroma, where I should be housed and fed and received like a king. Would I promise to do so? and they would look forward to it. My friend presses me, but I cannot promise, much as I appreciate their hospitable offer.

The postmaster keeps a grocery and general shop, and is an interesting, sharp-witted man. Mrs. Sutherland is a beautiful old lady between seventy and eighty, and quite pretty, lively, and affable. She tells me about her son who is a sailor and travels over the world. No, he will never settle here again; there is nothing for him to do, nothing to interest him. Indeed, they are all old people about here, all old-age pensioners. The youth of the place, male and female, have all gone to foreign countries or else to towns. They say they cannot get a living here, land is so dear. I should say it is poor also. But if ownership could be encouraged the land could certainly be made more productive; besides the advantage of retaining much of the native youth and strength, which under present conditions leave the country for want of scope and interest. It is pitiable to find steady labourers, men and women, who have worked hard all their

lives, from early morn to late at night, as these people have, ending their days in comparative poverty. Here the old-age pensions are an untold blessing, and are largely taken advantage of; indeed, the inhabitants being mostly old people, they are nearly all pensioners.

Next day my friend walks with me to Thurso, where we lunch together. He sees me off by the afternoon train to Inverness, and I walk home from Edinburgh by the east coast route; but that is another tale.

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